

Echoes of the Fall of the Umayyads in Traditional and Modern Sources:
A Case Study of the Final Eight Years of the Umayyad Empire with
Some Reference to Gramsci's Theory of Cultural Hegemony

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Abstract

The prolonged decline of the Umayyads is among the most intriguing episodes in Muslim history, and has generated a lasting impact on subsequent Muslim socio-political and religious thinking. The early sources for the Umayyad period comprise various conflicting reports, and problems of reconstruction become more complex since most sources were composed during ʿAbbāsīd times, meaning they were generally hostile towards the Umayyads. The time frame of the study covers the last eight years of the Umayyad empire; more precisely the period from the death of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik (d. 125/743) to the end of the Umayyad era 132/750.

Meticulous and careful examination of the pre-modern sources, combined with modern research approaches has helped in identifying the objectives of various early historiographers in their descriptions of Umayyad decline. The study focuses primarily on analysing the pre-modern sources (specifically al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Ṭabarī, al-Masʿūdī, Ibn Athīr and Ibn Khaldūn) and applies a thematic approach to the source materials, through which the various strands that defined and illustrated that decline can be followed. This makes it possible to evaluate how extensively each of three themes (the role of religious movements, the mawālī, and aṣabīya) was dealt with in the early historiographies and to what extent they differ from one another.

The development of religious ideas and how they contributed to the fall of the Umayyads and the rise of oppositional forces is also central in this regard and three religious movements (the ʿAbbasids, Khawārij, and Qadarīya) are explored. On the basis of the information gleaned from comparing the writings of the early historiographers, the study has also adopted a comparative study of modern historiography and approaches in assessing the Umayyad fall. Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony is used to explain and interpret aspects of the formation and development of the Umayyad period; it can also be used to assess the viability of the ideology, organisation and strategy of the early oppositional movements as a counter-hegemonic ideological force.

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1 Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The present study endeavours to catch echoes of the fall of the Umayyads through an analysis of both traditional and modern historical sources. In particular it seeks to answer the following two questions: What were the aims and objectives of traditional or pre-Modern historiographers in describing the fall of the Umayyads? and what are the modern approaches to understanding the causes of that fall? Through these questions it may be possible to identify the various approaches and methodologies that were used by the historiographers in interpreting the factors at play during the last eight years of Umayyad rule and more specifically, the aspects that contributed to Umayyad decline. Another key research question asked in the study is whether application of Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony can somehow explain the fall of the Umayyads? The thesis will apply aspects of Gramsci's theory with the intention of possibly establishing an alternative interpretation of the reasons for the fall of the Umayyads.

Gramsci, an important twentieth century post-modern Marxist Italian thinker, departs significantly from the Marxist tradition in one key aspect. Whereas for classical Marxists, objective material conditions are considered a core element for all economic and socio-political processes, with a society's historical development interpreted on the basis of its production of material objects, for Gramsci, by contrast, human subjectivity is central, signifying that any thorough analysis of social development cannot overlook the cultural or the spiritual. Therefore the study aims to comprehend the socio-political development of the Umayyad period in the light of Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony.

This initial chapter illustrates the fundamental discourses of the thesis. It introduces the subject matter, its scope and the research questions, and examines a number of pertinent primary and secondary sources on the subject, which will lead to the formulation of a core hypothesis, research design and methodology. An outline of the thesis and its chapters is also provided.

1.2 Historical Overview

The fall of the Umayyads is one of the most intriguing and significant episodes in Muslim history, since it generated a lasting impact on subsequent Muslim socio-political and religious thought. The early sources of the period under study offer various conflicting reports, but the problem of historical reconstruction becomes even more complex, since many of the early sources on the Umayyads were composed during ʿAbbāsīd times, and were mostly anti-Umayyad in their approach. Furthermore, during the medieval period scholars did not properly evaluate the sources of Umayyad history, with the exception of Ibn Khaldūn who argued against the traditional view of the dynasty. His critical understanding of the philosophy of history led him to read Umayyad history with a more objective eye.¹

Historians are of course products of their own time. They evaluate history under the influence of their current intellectual environments and then explain it through the lenses of their contemporary dominant paradigms in order to comprehend the past through present-day idioms. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many orientalist endeavoured to examine the Umayyad period by applying specific theories, and most of these historiographers analysed the historical data according to various prior suppositions and hypotheses. Umayyad rule has also been examined through the lens of modern nationalistic approaches in the context of Arab-Persian conflicts. Unsurprisingly, socialist orientalist interpreted historical events of Umayyad rule in economic terms,² constructing internal and external conflicts as class struggles during the first and second centuries of Islam. Although the history of the Umayyad received less attention in the period after the Second World War, the problem of Israel and Palestine, as Hawting argues, “fostered an

¹ Ibn Khaldūn argued that Banū ʿAbd Munāf had held the most prestigious and respectable position in Quraysh in the pre-Islamic period, while its sub-clans Banū Umayyah and Banū Hāshim had religious and political authority. However, Banū Umayyah held a high position and authority because of their superior numbers. After the arrival of Islam, when the Prophet, who was a Hāshimite, migrated to Medina, the Umayyads gained exclusive authority in Mecca, and for a time tribal vanities diminished under Islam. However, within the next forty years, Banū Umayyah had once more reasserted high authority over all the Arab tribes, under the leadership of Muʿāwiyah who established a robust administrative system with lasting impact on subsequent periods. Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh Ibn Khaldūn, Dawla bani-Umayya*, (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 2010), 5/3.

² For instance, in evaluating the history of Islam the Russian scholar, E. A. Belyaev, applied a Marxist approach to class and social relationships in his book *Arabs, Islam and the Arab Caliphate in the Early Middle Ages* (1969).

interest in Umayyad policies in the region and especially in the importance of Jerusalem of the Umayyads.”³ Three relevant historical viewpoints are briefly identified: traditional understanding; Arab-Persian conflict; and internal conflict of Arab tribes in the decline of the Umayyads.

Many Muslim scholars have endorsed the traditional understanding that the ʿAbbāsīd and ʿAlīd movements played a decisive role in the disintegration of the authority of the Umayyads. According to this view, Umayyad decline occurred due to the ascendance of another Arab family. Contemporary Arab scholars such as Aḥmad Amīn Miṣrī in *Ḍuḥā al-Islām*, al-Khudrī in *al-Dawla al-ʿAbbāsīya* and Jurjī Zaydān in *Tārīkh al-Tamadun al-Islāmī* support this traditional perspective, and much literature is available to validate their opinion.⁴ Over time, this internal Arab conflict found expression as Islam’s sectarian division, and compared to their Sunnī counterparts, the Shīʿī sources displayed an even greater antagonism towards the Umayyads. Of note is the fact that the Salafīs, rather than the Syrians, systematically claimed their heritage as Umayyad, probably locating the Umayyads in the sphere of Sunnī Islam. Moreover, they were more concerned with the role of Muʿāwīya and other Umayyads in the polemic between Sunnīs and Shiʿīs. This situation remained more intense in predominately Shiʿī Iraq under the Sunnīs.

With regard to Arab-Persian (Iranian) conflict, Arab and western scholars alike have, during the last two centuries, regarded the fall of the Umayyads as a consequence of the historical Arab-Iranian conflict. According to this interpretation, the Iranians, being very proud of their civilization and intellectualism, were not satisfied with Arab domination. Although they did accept Islam, they did not accept Arab hegemony, and Umayyad repression and marginalisation of the Iranian population exacerbated their anti-Arab sentiment. Writing about the fall of the Arab kingdom Julius Wellhausen remarks: “What has been said...about the relationship between Arabs and

³ G. R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam: The Umayyad Caliphate A.D. 661-750*, (Worcester UK: Croom Helm Ltd., 1986), 127.

⁴ Zaydān devoted one third of his book, or about a hundred pages, to the study of the Umayyads, evaluating the Umayyad period in the context of pre-Islamic rivalries between the Umayyads and Hāshimites, and framing Umayyad ascendancy in the following terms: “During the time of Muʿāwīya, they regained their pre-Islamic hegemony while the exclusive recovery of sovereignty was achieved during the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik and al-Walīd.” The Umayyads acquired autocracy through “the clan-feeling of the Kurashites, and pressing into their service the other clan-feelings.” Cf. Zaydān, *History of Islamic Civilisation*, tr. D. S. Margoliouth, (Kitāb Bhavan, Fine Press: Delhi, 1978), 63.

Iranians refers essentially to the two Marches... There the two parties were still in a state of conflict with each other, and while Islam had gained some firm positions, it had not completely prevailed.”⁵ Wellhausen’s theory was followed by others proposed by noted orientalist and Arabs.⁶

More recent Arab scholars have also focused on another dimension of the issue, and their consideration of the Umayyads is derived from their own contemporary need for an historic identity in the modern world through which to strengthen their sense of nationalism. They paid special attention to the reconstruction of Umayyad history, particularly after the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, since Umayyad governance was perceived as the model par excellence of Arab rule. Indeed many modern scholars concentrate on this topic in their attempt to ground the modern Arab nationalist project in historical fact. Contemporary scholarly discourses of identity, religion, and nationalism create the conceptual framework they have sought in order to address contemporary challenges. The “Arab nationalism” of the Umayyads proved to be inspiring for many modern Arabs, while to the pan-Islamists, whose ideological foundations lay in the Islamic identity and brotherhood of the Muslims, this over-enthusiastic portrayal of the Umayyads may have proved less appealing. Criticising the Umayyads for their hegemonic rule over the non-Arab Muslims, both Islamic revivalists and pan-Islamists argue that the Umayyads undermined the basic Islamic concepts of equality and equity and that their rule represented the pinnacle of Arab chauvinism. Meanwhile, among pro-Umayyad scholars, the Salafīs held a particularly favourable view of the dynasty due to the role of the Mu‘āwīya. In contrast to the Shi‘īs, Salafīs greatly respect the Mu‘āwīya, whom they consider the continuation of the Rashidūn period, and therefore focus on developing a favourable image of the Umayyads. Indeed, as Hawting correctly notes, “the possible tension between Islam and Arab nationalism could affect views of the Umayyads”.⁷ Scholars such as Dennett have argued that the factors leading to the fall of the Umayyads included the internal conflicts among the ruling class and the fact that the dynasty did not have the best claims for legitimacy. According to this interpretation, such problems worsened in the provinces

⁵ J. Wellhausen, *Arab Kingdom and its Fall*, (London: Curzon Press, 1927), 492.

⁶ Cf. Theodor Nöldeke, “Zur Geschichte der Omayyaden” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Vol. LV, 1901, 683-691; William Muir, *The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline and Fall*, ed. T. H. Weir (Edinburgh, 1924); Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs from the Earliest Times to the Present*, (London: Macmillan, 1970).

⁷ Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, 126.

(the centre of Umayyad rule being Syria) and culminated in the fall of the Umayyads.⁸ Contrary to Wellhausen's theory, which constructs the mawālī of Khurāsān as having played a central role in the disintegration of Umayyad rule, the revisionists such as Shaban argue that after Khurāsān was conquered during the reign of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, the Arabs had established harmonious relations with the native population.⁹ Al-Ṭabarī¹⁰ and al-Balādhurī¹¹ reported many traditions regarding the Arabs' settlement in Khurāsān and their assimilation into Persian society, including their frequent adoption of Persian names and titles.¹² Modern scholars appear to have misinterpreted this assimilation, regarding this group as part of the Persian elites who revolted against Umayyad rule, when in fact it is more likely that they were Arabs who, while holding grievances against the Umayyads, had nothing to do with the anti-Arab movement or Arab-Iranian conflict. For example, Jadīʿ b. ʿAlī al-Kirmānī, Khāzim b. Khazīmah al-Marwazī, al-Faḍl b. Sulaymān al-Ṭūsī, Amīr b. ʿUmayrah al-Samarqandī, and ʿUmar b. Ḥafṣ al-Muḥallabī known as Hazārmard, were all Arabs with Persian names or titles. Given the assumptions of Wellhausen and his followers, re-evaluation of the sources in order to identify the causes of Umayyad decline is both appropriate and necessary.

1.3 Scope of the Work, Methodology and Hypothesis

Pre-Modern historiographers usually present an anti-Umayyad narrative of the events surrounding the fall of the Umayyads. This uniformity of approach appears to be due to their heavy reliance on the reports of Abū-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Madāʾinī (d. 225/839). A client of the Quraysh, al-Madāʾinī was considered to be an authority on the early history of the Arabs in Khurāsān and Basra, and his work constitutes a major source for many historiographers, with the most complete

⁸ D. C. Dennett, *Marwān ibn Muhammad: The Passing of the Umayyad Caliphate*, PhD dissertation, Harvard University, USA, (1939), vii.

⁹ Shaban, M. A., *The ʿAbbāsīd Revolution*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 33.

¹⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr (d. 310/923), *Tārīkh al-Umam wa-al-Mulūk*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabīyah, 1971), 81, 155, 156/2.

¹¹ Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 507, Al-Balādhurī notes that Ziyād dispatched the settlers to Khurāsān with their families.

¹² Shaban notes that "50,000 Arab families came to Khurāsān. They were settled in the different villages of the oasis of Marv." Shaban, *The ʿAbbāsīd Revolution*, 33-34.

version of his writings being that preserved by al-Ṭabarī.¹³ The other important source of al-Madāʿinī's reports is the Kitāb al-futūḥ of Abu Muḥammad Aḥmad b. Aʿṭham al-Kūfī al-Kindī. Both al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892) and al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) derived substantial material from al-Madāʿinī, and also structured their work around his information on events of that period and their chronology.¹⁴ However, they drew additional information from other sources in order to fill obvious lacunae and create a coherent narrative of the period. Most of the later historiographers, like al-Azdī (d. 334/945)¹⁵ and Ibn Athīr (d. 630/1234), either abridged the narratives of al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī or constructed their own historiographies, largely based on the earlier historiographies that had been composed during the early 3rd/9th century.¹⁶

Further complexities are present in the interpretation of the narratives of the late Umayyad period. The issue of causality is not easy to address, since the alternative narratives of these events are not coherent. Scholars have to rely on the interpretive comments of al-Balādhurī, al-Ṭabarī and others on the reports of al-Madāʿinī and other earlier sources, even though such narrow interpretations are insufficient for a holistic comprehension of the reasons behind the events. Moreover, the narratives are in many cases fragmented, and do not define the most significant causes of the incidents. Steven Judd highlights this obscurity, noting that:

their sources sometime explain events as manifestations of struggles between the great tribal blocs of Qays and Yemen. In other instances, they focus on the complexities of Umayyad family politics and the clashing egos of ambitious princes. In still other instances, their sources emphasize the struggle between pious protagonists and libertine, sometime heretical opponents. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to determine whose voice offers which narrative and at times the narratives meld into a complex melange of tribe, family and religion.¹⁷

¹³ Judd, Steven Clark, *The Third Fitna: Orthodoxy, Heresy and Coercion in Late Umayyad History* (PhD thesis, Near Eastern Studies, The University of Michigan, 1997), 56.

¹⁴ Duri, A. H, *The Rise of Historical Writings among the Arabs*, tr. Lawrence Conrad, (Preston: Preston University Press, 1983), 70.

¹⁵ cf. al-Azdī Yazīd, b. Muḥammad Abū Zakarīya, *Tārīkh Mawṣil*, ed. ʿAlī Ḥabība, (Cairo, 1967).

¹⁶ cf. Ibn Athīr, ʿIzz al-Dīn ʿAlī, *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, (Beirut: Dār Sādir, and Dār al-Beirut, 1965-67).

¹⁷ Judd, *The Third Fitna: Orthodoxy*, 57.

Al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī became principal sources for later historians. For instance, Abū Zakariya Yazīd b. Muḥammad al-Azdī (d. 334/945) derived most of his information from al-Ṭabarī in his *Tārīkh al-Mawṣil*. He abridged al-Ṭabarī's accounts and presented a concise history of the city, describing its significance to the rule of the Umayyads. In contrast to his predecessors al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī, al-Azdī gave greater prominence to tribal identities. Similarly, ʿIzz al-Dīn b. al-Athīr (d. 630/1234) extracted both the structure and material of his *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh* from al-Ṭabarī. He also relied heavily on the reports of al-Balādhurī. However, his treatment of the Umayyads resembles Azdī's work, in its characterisation of tribal struggles for authority during the Umayyad period. Interpretations of the fall of the Umayyads vary in different historiographies. Al-Balādhurī, for instance, gives more importance to the ideological differences and their impact on a religious milieu in which the Qadarīs and their opponents played a crucial role in the events that precipitated Umayyad decline, whereas al-Ṭabarī's accounts and his interpretations present a *mélange* of tribal, ideological and family concerns. His treatment of the subject influenced most of the historiographers who came after him, as the work of al-Azdī and Ibn Athīr makes clear. In view of such differing approaches, it is often argued that the conception of late Umayyad history transformed significantly over time. Judd traces this evolution, drawing an important distinction: "early historians, such as al-Balādhurī, perceived events in religious terms while later sources progressively subordinated issues of religion to the tribal narrative."¹⁸

The present research focuses primarily on an analysis of the classical sources in order to identify the aims and objectives of the various early historiographers in describing Umayyad decline. Several themes are used to describe this decline, and the study will try to assess the extent to which each theme was developed in early historiographies, while also identifying the degree to which each differs from the others. More specifically, a comparison is made based on the works of five well-known pre-modern historians of the classical and middle periods: one from the 3rd/9th century, two from the 4th/10th century, one from the 7th/13th and one from the 9th/15th century:

1. Al-Yaʿqūbī, Aḥmad b. Yaʿqūb (d. 284/897): *Tārīkh al-Yaʿqūbī*
2. Al-Ṭabarī, Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr (d. 310/923): *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-al-Mulūk*

¹⁸ Judd, *The Third Fitna*, 59, 60.

3. Al-Mas'ūdī, Abū al-Ḥasan °Alī b. Husayn (d. 345/956): *Murūj al-Dhahab and Tanbīh wa-al-Ishrāf*
4. Ibn Athīr, °Izz al-Dīn, °Alī b. Muḥammad (d. 630/1233), *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*
5. Ibn Khaldūn, Abū Zayd °Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad (808/1406): *Kitāb al-'Ibar wa-Dīwān al-Mubtad'ī wa-al-Khabar*

In order to answer my two research questions, a primary task within this thesis is to compare and contrast the aims and objectives of these historiographers and to understand the extent to which these historical sources display an anti-Umayyad stance. In doing so, a comparative research method will be qualitatively applied in order to identify the aims and objective in both the pre-Modern and Modern sources, with comparisons among pre-Modern sources and among Modern sources respectively.

The study will also analyse the degree to which the sources differ in the depiction and interpretation of the fall of the Umayyads, with the aim of examining the decline of the Umayyads in a more objective and comprehensive manner. Its chronological focus is that of the last eight years of the Umayyad empire, more precisely, from the death of Hishām b. °Abd al-Malik (r. 105/724-125/743) to the end of the Umayyad era 132/750. In addition it will examine modern historiographies in order to assess their aims and objectives in interpreting the fall of the Umayyads, as well as to identify the ways in which modern scholars explain the Umayyad fall according to various themes.

As noted above, most of the modern historiographers studying the Umayyad period have attempted to reconstruct the history of the dynasty in the light of certain prior suppositions. The decline of the Umayyads has been evaluated according to different objectives and variously presented as the result of conflicts between Umayyads and Hāshimids, Arab and non-Arab mawālī, or Yemenīs and Qaysīs. On the other hand, some view the collapse of the Umayyads as the result of the ruling family's own internal conflict. Scholars such as Blankinship argue that, with a weakened Umayyad army on the external front, *jihād*¹⁹ could not be sustained: consequently the Umayyads lost an important source of their legitimacy in internal politics.²⁰ Van Vloten views the role of socio-

¹⁹ *Jihād*'s literal meaning is 'struggle'. In Islamic terms, it is employed for holy war against non-Muslims in order to defend or extend the Muslim rule.

²⁰ Blankinship, Khalid Yahya, *The End of the Jihād State*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 1-4.

religious movements as an important factor in the fall of the Umayyads, when rebellious movements initiated their political struggle against the Umayyads by declaring them anti-Islamic.²¹

The third and key research question, as noted earlier, is ‘how can an application of Gramsci’s theory of cultural hegemony explain the fall of the Umayyads? The practicability of the application of Gramsci’s theory of cultural hegemony to the study of events leading to the Umayyad decline, and the extent to which this theory can contribute to more nuanced understandings of the dynasty’s final demise will be examined in the course of the study.

Antonio Gramsci was an important post-modern Marxist Italian thinker of the twentieth century. In classical Marxism, the objective material conditions are considered a core element for all economic and socio-political processes. According to this view, the historical development of society is interpreted on the basis of the production of material objects. Contrary to this approach, Gramsci argues that human subjectivity is central to such processes, and that the role of cultural and spiritual factors in a society’s evolution cannot be ignored, and values socio-cultural and intellectual movements in the construction of human society. In his Notebook, he explains his theory of hegemony and certain guiding themes around which it revolves. Joseph V. Femia describes Gramsci’s guiding themes as follows: (a) the nature of power in advanced capitalist regimes; (b) the methods whereby this power can be undermined; (c) the character of the new proletarian civilization; and (d) the relationship between the material and spiritual sides of existence, further noting that Gramsci centres each of them around his unifying concept of hegemony.²²

This thesis seeks to evaluate social development during the period of Umayyad rule according to some guiding themes, mentioned in the outline below, in the light of Gramsci’s theory of hegemony. Gramsci’s idealism leads him to reject the mechanical determinism of positivist

²¹ According to Dennett: “The revolt in Khorasan, which was due only in part to the social and religious factors so exaggerated by Van Vloten, was certainly the occasion, but not the cause, for the final victory of the ‘Abbasid.” (Dennett, *Marwān ibn Muhammad*, vi).

²² Femia, Joseph, *Gramsci’s Political Thought: Hegemony, Consciousness, and the Revolutionary Process*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 1-4.

Marxism. The central point of his theory is that objective material interests are not mechanically translated into class consciousness. Rather, the dominant class controls society by presenting values that are acceptable to the masses. The Umayyads had failed to sustain their cultural, moral and intellectual values by the end of their rule, whereas the ʿAbbāsids successfully presented religious ideology and moral values that were acceptable to the people of Khurāsān. On this basis, they effectively organised a revolutionary anti-Umayyad movement.

The study therefore seeks to apply Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony to an analysis of the ʿAbbāsīd revolution and Umayyad decline. Gramsci argues that the supremacy of a class or group over the society is established through two methods: (i) domination and coercion, and (ii) intellectual and moral leadership. The latter in fact constitutes hegemony, and in this way, the society accepts the supremacy of the dominant class, apparently by choice, while the dominant class rules the society by the consent of the ruled class rather than by force or coercion. Gramsci constructs the state as establishing its supremacy through coercive machinery, while intellectual and moral leadership provides supremacy to the state. The educational and religious institutions of 'civil society' play a significant role in attaining supremacy for the dominant class. Here the focus is on the role of religious institutions and religious movements during the Umayyad period, and specifically the ways in which the Umayyads successfully mobilised a moral and intellectual leadership for the construction of their hegemony. The study also seeks answers for the failure of anti-Umayyad forces to initiate any effective revolutionary movements until the death of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik.

Gramsci recognises the dichotomy of political and civil society. He views political society as the state, while civil society is composed of intellectuals, scholars, and public opinion-making institutions. Accordingly, whenever the State seeks to introduce or implement unpopular policy, it mobilises civil society to manipulate the state's policy in a manner interpreted as acceptable by the wider society. Thus civil society, whether or not it is controlled by the state, acquires the consent of the ruled class for the realising of state policy. In Gramsci's analysis, "the State is the entire complex of political and theoretical activity by which the ruling classes not only justify and maintain their domination but also succeed in obtaining the active consent of the governed", while

civil society is the essential centre of radiation.²³ This hypothesis is used to analyse the Umayyads' attempt to mobilise civil society in order to consolidate their power, as well as to evaluate the ways in which socio-cultural and religious institutions and individual intellectuals provided them with sustainable strength to rule. Quite apart from its indisputable contemporary intellectual, political and philosophical influence, Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony has been selected for this task because of his comprehensive approach to the study of human development. In my view, an application of this theory to pertinent cultural, social and spiritual-religious factors may provide a new and more nuanced understanding of the reasons for Umayyad decline.

1.4 Outline of the Study

In order to answer the central questions of this thesis, the study is divided into seven chapters including this introductory chapter, and the second chapter which constitutes a literature review which concurrently develops some of the hypothetical aspects already outlined above. The four main chapters (Three to Six) focus on four different themes considered important for analysing the fall of the Umayyads, and are followed by an overall summary of the research and its conclusions.

Each chapter has been divided into three sections:

1. A study of modern narratives of the fall of the Umayyads
2. A study of pre-modern sources identifying their aims and objectives in depicting the fall of the Umayyads.
3. A critical study of the factors contributing to the fall of the Umayyads, achieved through application of Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony to the same factors.

A more detailed outline follows.

Chapter One: Introduction

Having introduced and defined the subject for analysis, the introductory chapter provides a brief historical overview and establishes the conceptual framework for the study.

²³ Gramsci, Antonio, *Selection from the Prison Notebooks*, eds. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 28.

Chapter Two: Literature Review: Themes, Genres and Hypothesis

A comprehensive review of the scholarly literature evaluates the nature of the differences and agreements between Muslim historiographers writing on the decline of the Umayyads. It also helps to define the limitations of the research and to construct a potential hypothesis for the study. Several important pre-Modern and modern sources of Muslim historiography that chronicle and comment on the decline of the Umayyads are considered, in particular works by well-known classical historiographers who analysed the early Islamic sources and derived certain substantial and distinctive conclusions from them. Attention is also given to modern approaches to the study of the Umayyads. Several Orientalists as well as modern Muslim historians have devised new research methods aimed at providing a better understanding of the Umayyads and their decline. The study identifies the aims and objectives of their interpretations by examining their arguments and evaluating their hypotheses. The literature review will also contribute to the design of a new, objective, and thorough research methodology through which to assess the subject under study with meticulous examination and careful analysis, and will also explore the application of various methods for testing the eventual hypothesis.

For a better understanding and definition of Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony and its various dimensions, the study examines the works of a number of eminent scholars who also applied his theory, albeit with the intention of analysing socio-political phenomena in a Western, non-Islamic domain. In addition, it reviews several works focused on the study of Muslim society in historical perspective in the light of Gramsci's theory of hegemony; these include Thomas J. Butko's *Revelation or Revolution: A Gramscian Approach to the Rise of Political Islam*, Ahmed Afzaal's *The Origin of Islam as a Social Movement*, and Robert Fatton's *Gramsci and Legitimization of the State: The Case of the Senegalese Passive Revolution*.²⁴

²⁴ Thomas J. Butko, "Revelation or Revolution: A Gramscian Approach to the Rise of Political Islam", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, May 2004, vol. 31 (1), . 41-62; Ahmed Afzaal, "The Origin of Islam as a Social Movement", in *Islamic Studies* (Islamic Research Institute Islamabad), Vol. 42, Summer 2003, 203-243; Fatton, Robert Jr., "Gramsci and the Legitimization of the State: the Case of the Senegalese Passive Revolution", *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique* (Canadian Political Science Association), Vol. 19, No. 4, Dec., 1986, 729-750.

This introductory chapter offers a systematic outline of the structure of the thesis, which consists of four main elements: a) the introduction of the subject matter with research questions and a potential hypothesis; b) the scope of the work and its limitations; c) a methodology that will enable the hypothesis to be tested; and d) a literature review and survey of important primary and secondary sources.

Chapter Three: Historical Background to the Umayyads

When considering the foundational issues of, and general background to Umayyad rule, the chapter looks first at the formation and establishment of the Umayyad caliphate, and examines the ways in which the Umayyads took control of the Muslim state and consolidated their power. It also aims to trace the nature of various socio-political dynamics in Muslim society that shaped its political structure, and explores the way in which the early sources presented the historical background of the Umayyads and the extent to which the modern interpretations are at variance with the pre-modern sources. Most importantly, it applies Gramsci's cultural theory to the study of the historical background of the Umayyads, seeking specifically to evaluate social development during Umayyad rule in light of Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony.

According to Gramsci, political thinking should be evaluated as an historical phenomenon through critical examination of historical conditions. Thus, revisionists interpreting historical development through the application of modern tools and existing techniques may be considered inaccurate in their approach. Interpretations of modern historiographers will therefore be evaluated in light of Gramsci's understanding, and revisionist interpretations, e.g., that of Shaban regarding tribal conflict, will need to be re-examined. In Shaban's view, tribal tensions during the Umayyad period were in fact a conflict between two political parties, one favouring expansion and the other preferring assimilation. However, such revisionist interpretations of political motivation have taken no account of the subjects' historical context. For the Gramscian approach, ahistorical methodologies are insufficient for a proper understanding of historical development, since contextual and textual analyses are both prerequisites for the accurate presentation of political thought. Thus the fall of the Umayyads is evaluated by revisiting the historical context of their rule.

More specifically, this chapter is devoted to evaluating social development under Umayyad rule, an approach that considers cultural as well as intellectual factors, and departs significantly from previous economically-oriented explanations for Umayyad decline. Scholars subscribing to the latter view include Blankinship, whose *The End of Jihad* views economic factors as the central force behind the dynasty's demise.²⁵ I would argue that, consistent with the theory of cultural hegemony, the early Umayyads established their own moral, intellectual, and socio-cultural values which helped to consolidate their rule over the society.

Chapter Four: The Role of Religious Movements in the Fall of the Umayyads

Narratives of the Umayyad fall recounted in both modern and pre-modern historiographies are many and varied. A prominent feature of that era was the growing number of religious movements; these, together with religion as a general phenomenon, are commonly acknowledged to have played a vital role both in the fall of the Umayyads and the rise of oppositional forces. Chapter Four aims to analyse the role of religion in the Umayyad decline. To provide greater analytical depth, it focuses on religious perceptions of the Umayyads, along with three important religious movements that were significantly opposed to this ruling dynasty: the ʿAbbāsīd movement, the Khawārij, and the Qadārīya. It also considers the interpretations of modern scholars and offers a comparison, naming five pre-modern sources in order to identify the various early historiographic narratives on the role and importance of such religious movements.

In addition this chapter assists with an understanding of the narratives of modern historiographers and their arguments, and in order to achieve a more nuanced evaluation, applies an analytical framework derived from a radically different intellectual tradition, cultural identity and historical context, i.e., the twentieth century Italian political theorist Antonio Gramsci. To reach a better understanding of the religious movements of the time, as well as why and how they contributed to the fall of the Umayyads, the study uses the Gramscian theory of hegemony. In demonstrating the ways in which these movements challenged the established authority of the Umayyads, the chapter aims, in Gramscian terms, to assess the viability of the ideology, organization and strategy of the

²⁵ Blankinship, Khalid Yahya, *The End of the Jihād State: The Reign of Hishām Ibn ʿAbd al-Malik and the Collapse of the Umayyads*, (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1994).

oppositional movements as a counter-hegemonic ideological force. Gramsci's theory of hegemony asserts that the rule of one class or group over the rest of society is not based solely on material power. Rather, the dominant class or group necessarily establishes its own cultural, political, and moral values as conventional norms of practical behaviour. Thus, the dominant class legitimises its political rule on the basis of moral and cultural values. In light of hegemony theory, it is clear that the Umayyads had lost their moral legitimacy by the end of their rule, whereas the ʿAbbāsids had successfully devised an alternative intellectual and moral authority through which they validated their political rule.

Chapter Five: Arab versus non-Arab and Perception of the Mawālī

During the Umayyad period, a kind of multi-cultural society emerged, in which social changes were characterised by Arab interaction with people of different regions and ethnicities. Some scholars argue that Umayyad rule is typified by Arab hegemony and domination over the subject peoples of Asia, Africa and Europe, with the Umayyads' socio-economic policies promoting feudal relations among the people of the state. This view is worth analysing in order to understand the extent to which the Umayyad policies were justified. Chapter Five also evaluates the impact of these policies on society, and assesses the nature of the relations between Arabs and mawālī, looking specifically at how the mawālī emerged as a social group, how this in turn influenced society and contributed to the fall of Umayyad rule, and how both the phenomenon and the causality are presented in pre-Modern and Modern sources. Further it attempts to demonstrate the potential for a careful re-examination of the primary sources to add new insights to previous investigations in this field. Significantly, modern historiographers have also analysed the role of the mawālī of Khurāsān and draw conclusions that are contrary to those offered by traditional narratives. For instance, Agha Said Saleh, on the basis of his demographic computations, argues that the decisive part in the revolution was played by old Arab warriors who resided in the Khurāsān region. The mawālī meanwhile appeared during the ʿAbbāsīd period during the process of Islamization.²⁶ On the basis of such historical sources, it would therefore seem more likely that the mawālī's role in the downfall of the Umayyads was marginal.

²⁶ Agha, Saleh Said, *The Revolution which toppled the Umayyads Neither Arab nor ʿAbbāsīd*, (Leiden: Brill, 2003)

Applying Gramsci's theory to the study of the mawālī yields interesting results. Gramsci argues that the dominant class controls the society by presenting values that are acceptable to the masses. The early Umayyads successfully maintained their power through devising moral values acceptable to the mawālī while also using coercive power when necessary. By contrast, the later Umayyads failed to sustain or promote their cultural, moral and intellectual values by the end of their rule. In the early period, a great number of scholars were from the mawālī who, in Gramscian terms, played the role of 'deputies' of the ruling class. However, with the emergence of class consciousness within the mawālī, a new group identity emerged and with it debates on equal rights and rebellious tendencies. The oppositional forces highlighted the discrimination while presenting an alternative ideology. Unlike other oppositional forces, the ʿAbbāsids successfully presented religious ideology and moral values that were acceptable to the mawālī, particularly those living in Khurāsān. On this basis they organised an effective revolutionary movement against the Umayyads. Analysis of the ʿAbbāsīd revolution and the fall of the Umayyads is therefore carried out using Gramsci's theory of revolutionary process.

Chapter Six: ʿAṣabīya, Tribalism and the Decline of the Umayyads

Chapter six assesses the early sources on the issue of ʿaṣabīya (group feeling on the basis of common genealogy; Ibn Khaldīn considered ʿaṣabīya as a key factor in establishing authority in a tribal society), and its role in the fall of the Umayyads. Similarly, the internal conflict within the royal family of the later Umayyad period is also seen as contributing to the fall of the dynasty. The theme of ʿaṣabīya is presented through three pairs of competing groups:

1. Internal conflict among the royal family
2. Yamanīs versus Qaysīs
3. Hāshimids versus Umayyads

Early sources on the issue of ʿaṣabīya and its role in the fall of the Umayyads are evaluated. In these sources, it is assumed that the later Umayyads could not maintain their ʿaṣabīya, and that conflict therefore emerged among Umayyad family members. Similarly, at a national level, the Arabs could not preserve their ʿaṣabīya, which eventually causing the outbreak of conflict among the Arab tribes. Consequently, the Arab Umayyad kingdom was replaced by the ʿAbbāsids who were mainly supported by the non-Arabs of Khurāsān. Pre-Modern sources appear mostly to

validate Ibn Khaldūn's ʿaṣabiya theory, by constructing the following narrative: the conflict among the members of the Umayyad family generated inter-tribal enmities among the Arabs, resulting in the decline of the Arab kingdom of the Umayyads. The conflict within the Umayyad royal family provoked the tribal conflict of Yemen and Muḍar. Pre-Modern historians also examine Hishām's unfriendly relations with his would-be successor al-Walīd b. Yazīd. When al-Walīd came to power, this discord led him to dismiss all Hishām's governors and deputies whom he punished mercilessly (with the exception of the governor of Iraq, Yūsuf b. ʿUmar). The subsequent tribal conflict influenced all aspects of socio-political and religious life. Meanwhile, the ʿAbbāsīd movement took advantage of the internal conflict and came into power with the assistance of their Khurāsānian allies, having engineered religious feeling to achieve their political target. In this context, Ibn Khaldūn's ʿaṣabiya theory is convincing, even logical. The Umayyads, having lost their power when conflict emerged within the members of their royal family, were replaced by the ʿAbbāsīds who came into power with the help of non-Arabs. Thus, this authority had to be shared with their non-Arabs supporters. Ironically, in contrast to the Umayyads, the ʿAbbāsīds could not enjoy absolute authority. The chapter weighs the viability of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of ʿaṣabiya as apposite to the interpretation of the Umayyad decline.

The second section of the chapter focuses on the study of modern sources. Most modern scholars, such as Wellhausen, Kennedy and Hawting, have argued that the internal family conflict and the tribal conflict were inextricably linked.²⁷ They agreed that the role of various members of the Umayyad royal family was decisive in shaping events in a particular direction, and viewed most of the tribal conflicts as having emerged because of the backing of important Umayyad family figures. Hawting supposes that al-Walīd II nursed a personal animosity towards Khalid al-Qasrī. However, the Umayyad princes and Yamanī elites considered al-Walīd's policies as part of his pro-Qaysī politics. The major divisions of the Syrian armed forces therefore refrained from accepting the authority of al-Walīd, and instead gathered around other members of the royal family

²⁷ Kennedy, Hugh, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: the Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century*, (A History of the Near East.) (London and New York: Longman, 1986), pp. 116, 112, 113; Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, 90.

who were considered suitable to rule.²⁸ Interpretations such as these demonstrate the continuous and important impact of Ibn Khaldūn's theory on modern interpretations of the fall of the Umayyads.

Gramsci's theory of hegemony significantly facilitates a deeper understanding of the real causes of Umayyad decline. The 'aṣabīya' corresponds in Gramscian terms to political society (i.e., the State), while civil society consists of intellectuals, scholars, and public opinion-making institutions. His model shows that whenever the State wants to introduce or implement unpopular policy, it mobilises civil society to manipulate state policy in a manner judged by the general population to be more acceptable. Civil society, whether under state control or not, thereby acquires the consent of the ruled class for the state's policy. Gramsci explains that "the State is the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules."²⁹ In his theory of hegemony, civil society is the essential centre of radiation. Transposing this theory to the Umayyads' historical and cultural context, political society is represented by the Syrian Army and Yemen tribes. In losing the allegiance of the political society, civil society also failed in mobilising the masses to accept the hegemony of the rulers. The Umayyads organised political society on a tribal basis, but when conflict emerged within the house of Umayyad and between the Yemen and Muḍar, the strength of their political society (or coercive power) also disappeared. Consequently, political society also became irreparably fractured. Ibn Khaldūn's theory of 'aṣabīya and Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony are both agreed on the importance of political society in order to enable the state to assert its power, a situation only possible where unity prevails. In the absence of coercive power, resistance movements have the undeniable potential to mobilise civil society against hegemony, as indeed the 'Abbāsids achieved by presenting a new ideology based on religious equality rather than tribalism.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

²⁸ Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, 93.

²⁹ Gramsci, *Selection from the Prison Notebooks*, 504.

2 Chapter Two: Literature Review According to Genres and Research Themes

2.1 Introduction

The historiography of the Umayyads has been compiled in a variety of literary genres, and it is not possible to present this literature under a single rubric. It may, however, be divided into several categories according to methodology, style, and titles. The most important category is that of fully-fledged histories and chronicles. Arguably, the most important and detailed history for the study of the Umayyads is al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-al-mulūk*, the most comprehensive historical work remaining from the ʿAbbāsīd period. Many modern historians studying the Umayyad era, such as Wellhausen, find their own work particularly well-informed by the rich detail in al-Ṭabarī's work. Al-Yaʿqūbī's historiography also contains highly valuable information for the study of the period, despite of the fact that his pro-ʿAlīd tendencies led him to apply an anti-Umayyad approach to his study. In addition, works by Al-Masʿūdī, Ibn Athīr and Ibn Khaldūn were selected for this study. Each of these works is reviewed in the following discussion.³⁰

Modern historiographies are of course equally necessary when seeking to gain a detailed picture of Umayyad rule. Moreover, they provide invaluable orientation on the methodologies applied to evaluate and interpret the primary sources. German Semiticist Julius Wellhausen, in his *The Arab Kingdom and its Fall*, and Hungarian Jewish scholar, Ignaz Goldziher in his *Muhammedanische Studien* ('Muslim Studies' in the English tradition) attempted to devise a

³⁰ The second most important category among the sources consists of biographical dictionaries and geographical surveys. Treatment of the subject is not directly undertaken in these works; rather, they are organised according to the principles of their particular genre. The *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Saʿd (d. 845 AD), and al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* are considered the most valuable biographical dictionaries for the study of the Umayyad period. As far as the *futūḥ* genre is concerned, Ibn ʿAsākir's *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq* is worth noting. Ibn ʿAsākir not only recounts the history of Damascus, but also reveals considerable information about individuals and their roles and achievements.

The third important source of Umayyad history is poetry. Poetry is considered an essential information source for the study of the pre-Islamic Arabian Peninsula, and its vitality remains equally important in the period of the Umayyads. Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī's *Kitāb al-Aghānī* is one of the major collections of Arabic poetry. Farazdaq and Jarīr (both d. circa 730 AD) were two important poets of the Umayyad era, and their poetry is the best depiction of their socio-political environment. Similarly the heresiographical literature that describes the sectarian conflicts in the early Muslim tradition is an important source for the study of religious development during the Umayyad period. For instance the *Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn* of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 935 AD) offers rich material for evaluating the religious and theological developments of the Umayyad period.

methodology for the study of earlier sources, undertaking critical analysis for this task. Employing such an approach, they examined the material, developing a hypothesis at variance with the traditional understandings of the Umayyads. Wellhausen for example admired Umayyad administration. His work was particularly followed by Belgian Jesuit Henri Lammens in his elaborate writings. In the late 1940s, Dennett criticised some of Wellhausen's interpretations of the Umayyads' fiscal system,³¹ while Shaban was similarly dissatisfied with Wellhausen for overstressing the importance and role of the Persian mawālī in the collapse of the Umayyads.³² Nevertheless, the essential structure of Wellhausen's study remains valid and offers great potential for the understanding of the Umayyads rule. Dennett's (1939) Harvard doctoral thesis *Marwān b. Muhammad: the Passing of the Umayyad Caliphate* is one of the most important modern works of its kind.

Dennett attempted a comprehensive analysis of the legal principles of the Umayyad system of taxation, and also analysed the military and political institutions of the later Umayyads, focusing particularly on the period of Marwān b. Muḥammad and the events of his day. He argued that the Umayyads attempted to preserve pre-Islamic Arab social institutions, since the Arabs did not perceive that the ʿAbbāsids were aiming to undermine these bodies. However, many of those who participated in the revolution realised their mistake after the fact, including Sulaymān b. Kathīr (leader of the ʿAbbāsīd movement in Marw and head naqīb) who proclaimed: "May God curse Abū Muslim and make his face as this cluster of grapes. We dug the river with our hands and another let the water in it."³³ Dennett brought many other novel insights to the subject, which will be considered later.

The key task of this study is to pursue the application of Gramsci's cultural theory to an analysis of the events leading to the decline of the Umayyads. Several scholarly works that have also applied Gramsci's cultural hegemony model have been selected for an analysis of socio-cultural and religious movements. Thus the literature review for this study includes three categories:

³¹ Dennett, *Marwān ibn Muhammad*, preface iii, 5.

³² Shaban, *The ʿAbbāsīd Revolution*, 155, 156.

³³ Maqrizī, *Kitāb al-Nazaʿ wa-al-Takhaṣīm*, ed. Gerhardus Vos, (Leiden, 1888), 52. The translation of the words of Sulaymān b. Kathīr was carried out by Dennett, *Marwān ibn Muhammad*, 328.

1. A review of (six) selected works which apply Gramsci's theories;
2. A review of (five) traditional sources on the fall of the Umayyads;
3. A review of (eleven books and two research articles) of the modern sources on the fall of the Umayyads.

2.2 Detailed Review of Some Works in which Gramscian Theory is Applied

2.2.1 Revelation or Revolution: Gramsci and the Rise of Political Islam

The concept of 'Political Islam' emerged from the work of twentieth century religious scholars. Thomas Butko, who attempts to analyse this contemporary phenomenon according to Gramscian understanding, argues that Islamic movements utilising the ideology of political Islam are less concerned with Islamic doctrine and faith, and more focused on using Islam to de-legitimise the power structure of the ruling elite. Since political Islam, particularly in the context of twentieth (and twenty-first) century Middle Eastern authoritarian states, provides a 'revolutionary' ideology, Islamic ideology can therefore provide the basis for initiating a solid counter-hegemonic movement. The presentation of Islam as a revolutionary ideology attracts and unites the marginalised ruled class against an authoritarian regime. Butko views this using a Gramscian approach: "the consummate aim is to construct an active counter-hegemonic force with the sole and ultimate objective of overthrowing the current elites and the present political, economic and social structure."³⁴ Clearly Political Islam can fulfil the role of an active counter-hegemonic force.

Gramsci asserts that such a counter-hegemonic force can only achieve its objectives by creating a revolutionary movement featuring a consistent ideology, well-organised organism, and viable strategy. Regarding his study of works by leading twentieth century Islamic theorists, particularly Ḥasan al-Bannā³ (d. 1949), Sayyad Quṭb (d. 1966), Abū al-ʿAlā³ Mawdūdī (d. 1979), and Ayatollah Khomeini (d. 1989), Butko's analysis uses a Gramscian approach to the practical and theoretical elements of the contemporary phenomenon of political Islam. These scholars were attempting to challenge the existing secularised regimes (i.e., hegemonic forces) with the aim of replacing the ruling elites and dominant powers with a new class, based on a viable ideology (i.e.,

³⁴ Thomas J. Butko, "Revelation or Revolution: A Gramscian Approach to the Rise of Political Islam", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, May 2004, vol. 31 (1), 41-62.

religion). Butko's work highlights a key similarity in the desired aims and objectives of Gramsci and the Islamic theorists, both of whom value the necessity of constructing a revolutionary organisation to function as a counter-hegemonic force, thereby challenging the authority of the ruling elites and eventually overthrowing them. The counter-hegemonic forces shatter the structure of the ruling elites on which their authority and legitimacy is predicated.³⁵

Gramsci rejects the 'universal truth' of common sense, claiming "that common sense is an ambiguous, contradictory, and multiform concept, and that to refer to common sense as a conformation of truth is nonsense."³⁶ Through this refutation of 'universal truth', he wishes to inspire the individual to reject the worldview produced by the hegemon or ruling elite while enabling the individual to create an alternative hegemon, and an innovative worldview separate from that which the ruling class has established. Islamic theorists also acknowledge the significance of the individual in the solid foundation of a revolutionary organization which may present an alternative 'common sense'. They believe that an individual is always in a state of flux, changing himself according to current requirements. Rather than following the 'common sense' of the hegemon, he devises his own worldview. Such a change in the individual represents his personal liberation and is also a first step towards forming larger groups of individuals who unite through an innovative and alternative worldview.

Gramsci's model emphasises the formation of a group of individuals disenchanted by the current socio-economic structure and aiming to rebel against the hegemon. These individuals may come from various segments of society but their shared experience of marginalisation, exclusion and repression gives them common ground through which to form a counter-hegemonic group playing

³⁵ Butko cites Youssef Choueiri who writes: "Qutb, al-Mawdudi, and Khomeini articulated a new Islamic theory and established the contemporary discourse of a variety of Islamic political organizations. To them, change had to be total, comprehensive and revolutionary. They saw no possibility of coexistence between Islam and other political and social systems." See Youssef M. Choueiri, "The Political Discourse of Contemporary Islamist Movements", in Abdel Salam Sidahmed and Anoushirvan Ehteshami, (eds.) *Islamic Fundamentalism* (Boulder: Westview, 1996), 32. According to Muhammad Faksh, the Islamists' primary aim "is to create an active revolutionary force, inciting *Jihād* to establish an Islamic order." Muhammad Faksh, *The Future of Islam in the Middle East: Fundamentalism in Egypt, Algeria, and Saudi Arabia* (Westport: Praeger, 1997), p. 15; Butko, 'Revelation or Revolution', 43 f.n.

³⁶ Gramsci, Selection from the Prison Notebooks, 423.

a significant role in the organisation of revolutionary force.³⁷ Islamic theorists also agree with Gramsci on the irrelevance of defining these groups in economic (i.e., class) terms. Instead, the counter-hegemonic bloc unites on the basis of similar ideas and common beliefs. Butko argues that the discourse of political Islam brings various individuals together to a common worldview.³⁸ The Islamic movements are intended to fill both economic and spiritual gaps. Islamists also believe that a revolutionary movement must gain the support of a significant segment of society in order to achieve their goal.

Gramsci's concept of state is no monolithic entity; rather it is composed of two interdependent components: "the State = political society + civil society, in other words, hegemony protected by the armour of coercion."³⁹ Thus hegemony is based on ideas that construct goodwill and acquire consent within civil society, which is itself based on private organizations or groups that manufacture the consent of the masses to accept the authority and legitimacy of the hegemon. Political society, on the other hand, is a kind of dictatorship that utilises force and coercion in order to establish rule; i.e., the hegemon maintains authority by establishing a relationship between the structure (economic base) and superstructure (ideology of the ruling class). Traditional Marxists argue that the structure (economics) is everything: nor does Gramsci ignore the importance of superstructure in determining the context of hegemon's legitimization and authority.⁴⁰

Similarly the Islamic theorists understand the modern state's ability "to construct an organic link between the state apparatus and civil society."⁴¹ Quṭb (d. 1966), an Islamist thinker in Egypt's Ikhwān movement, also appreciated the state's ability to control and construct an ideology by which to acquire the consent of the masses. The hegemon would utilise coercive instruments (e.g., army and police), while simultaneously mobilizing the intellectual elite to present ideas that might strengthen hegemonic authority, for instance by changing the content of public education. Quṭb's model par excellence in this regard was the Nasserist State, which extended Nasser's authority by

³⁷ *ibid.*, 349.

³⁸ Butko, "Revelation or Revolution", 45.

³⁹ Gramsci, *Selection from the Prison Notebooks*, 263.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 407.

⁴¹ Butko, "Revelation or Revolution", 46.

controlling the core institutions of civil society, namely the family, education, and media.⁴² Thus, Nasser successfully shaped the consciousness of Egyptians to accept his authority. Qutb fully recognised the hegemonic potential of such a state structure and rejected it outright, exhorting Islamists to comprehend ideology and evaluate its political foundations for the construction of an alternative and viable ideology through which to destroy the existing regime.

Butko analyses the Islamist's ideology, organisation and strategy from various dimensions in the light of Gramscian understanding and concludes that the phenomenon of political Islam should be understood as counter-hegemonic movement. He believes the Muslim theorists, are not concerned simply with morality, doctrine, or faith; rather their primary objective is to acquire political power.⁴³ His application of Gramsci's theories to the analysis of political Islam is undoubtedly a valuable contribution to this field, and as such, is also beneficial for the present study of the religious movements characterising the Umayyad period.

2.2.2 The Origin of Islam as a Social Movement

Ahmed Afzaal attempts to interpret the rise of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula during the life of the Prophet Muḥammad in terms of social movement. Through applying modern social theories, including Gramsci's theory of hegemony, he aims to assess certain dynamics within the rise of Islam in a historical context, and argues that the contemporary Islamic movements have used the career of Prophet Muḥammad in order to legitimize their own policies, strategies and targets. There are various contemporary Islamic movements, ranging from the more conservative Tablighī Jamā'at to the ultra-violent Islamist al-Qā'ida, and although they have different and diverse political positions and frameworks they seek authority and authenticity, basing their arguments and methodologies on the life and career of the Prophet Muḥammad. Great confusion is evident

⁴² Butko notes: "A good example in the case of the Muslim world is Egypt and the discrediting of Nasser's ideology of National Socialism in the aftermath of their crushing defeat at the hands of Israel during the Six-Day War of June 1967. Of course, in this case, Nasser had crushed all opposition to his regime, especially in the form of the Muslim Brotherhood. Thus, no potential counter-hegemonic force was present to take advantage of the breakdown in the regime's superstructure" (Butko, "Revelation or Revolution", 48 f.n.)

⁴³ *ibid.*, 60.

among the Islamists in relation to the interpretation of the historical data on the Prophet's life and work.⁴⁴

Contemporary sociological research often differentiates between religious and social movements. Contrary to this approach, Afzaal argues that Prophet Muḥammad's aim was to reform Arabian society from religio-ethical as well as socio-political perspectives.⁴⁵ On the basis of this argument, he regards the division between the socio-political and religio-ethical in Islam as artificial, and to support this view refers to Fazlur Rahman, a modernist scholar who considers Islam's social aspect to be a logical consequence of its religious aspect, with the life and career of Prophet Muḥammad providing the best example. Rahman argues that from an Islamic perspective, 'state' and 'religion' are neither united nor conflicting. The state has no separate identity, but instead is the reflex of Islamic principles and moral values, and as such constitutes an instrument of Islam. Rahman reminds his readers of the all-encompassing nature of the faith: "in Islam there no separation between religion and state."⁴⁶

2.2.3 The Role of Religion in Social Change

Max Weber, the German founding father of modern sociology, examined the role of religion in social change. According to his analysis, prophets incidentally played a vital role at the margins of a society in crisis. To Weber, prophecy was "a special form of organizational leadership that arises at the margins of society in times of crisis as a politically revolutionary force."⁴⁷ In other words, prophets and their initial function were firmly located within the religious domain. Theodore Long, a modern sociologist and expert on Weber, notes that the basic task of the prophet, according to Weber, is to convey a divine message to humankind. If the divine message is accepted

⁴⁴ Ahmed Afzaal, "The Origin of Islam as a Social Movement", in *Islamic Studies* (Islamic Research Institute Islamabad), Vol. 42, Summer 2003, 203-243 at 203, 204.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 205.

⁴⁶ Fazlur Rahman, "Islam and Political Action: Politics in the Service of Religion" in Nigel Biggar, Jamie S. Scott, and William Schweiker, eds., *Cities of Gods: Faith, Politics, and Pluralism in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), 154.

⁴⁷ Theodore E. Long, "A Theory of Prophetic Religion and Politics" in Anson Shupe and Jeffrey K. Hadden, eds., *The Politics of Religion and Social Change* (New York: Paragon House, 1988), 4. See also, Max Weber, "The Prophet" in his *The Sociology of Religion* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1993), 46-59; Idem, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: The Free Press, 1947), 358-363.

then usually the prophet's religious authority is established, whilst the impact of his divine message is most often manifested in the culture rather than the political system of that society.⁴⁸ Afzaal does not accept Weber's argument that religion appears in its role as a politically revolutionary force in times of crisis, and maintains that the Prophet Muhammad's role in socio-political activism was not incidental; it can be considered as "a natural consequence of his religio-ethical understanding which brought a great social change in his time."⁴⁹

2.2.4 Gramsci and Social Change

Afzaal identifies three requirements for initiating any reformatory social movement: (i) an active group of individuals who have prepared themselves to initiate a social movement for change. They must possess certain characteristics that help them to stand against the status quo and enable them to act as an oppositional force; (ii) the movement must have a strong intellectual engagement with its hostile environment, and the capacity to challenge the prevailing status quo on intellectual grounds. The legitimacy of any socio-political and economic structures is considered a hindrance for a social movement; thus, any reformatory movement must become involved in an intellectual activity that can provide acceptable alternatives to the current legitimacy. The movement must also engage in intellectual activity so as to produce innovative solutions to any prevailing social crisis or unrest; (iii) the movement must have an organisational structure in order to execute its plan according to a systemic strategy. This three-fold scheme similarly applies to religious movements.

Afzaal views Gramsci's ideas as relevant to the second and third areas of social transformation noted above. Gramsci distinguishes between notions of coercion (denoting domination by force) and hegemony (signifying the acquisition of popular consent). Coercion operates through political society and hegemony through civil society. The intellectuals and institutions of civil society work to assure the masses that the prevailing status quo, structure, and distribution of power among different sections of society are beneficial and advantageous for all. Consequently, most of the ruled masses extend their consent to the ruling class, either actively or passively. Gramsci

⁴⁸ Theodore E. Long, "A Theory of Prophetic Religion and Politics", 4.

⁴⁹ Afzaal, 'The Origin of Islam as a Social Movement', 207.

highlights the constant threat of revolts against the ruling state, and the state's consequent need to maintain coercive power in order to prevent popular rebellion.⁵⁰ The modern status quo is upheld through maintaining hegemony sustained by coercion. Moreover, the role of intellectual institutions is central to the construction of hegemony. It is necessary for any social movement to devise a counter-hegemony in order to challenge the moral authority and cultural receptivity upon which the existing ruling class has established its authority. It is also necessary to acquire the consent of the masses before challenging the political authority of the ruling class and its coercive machinery.⁵¹

To Afzaal, Gramsci's idea of counter-hegemony and transformation of subjective consciousness revolves around the notion of intellectual engagement. Preparing subjective consciousness among individuals provides the basis for concrete structural transformation. In Afzaal's view, the life of Muhammad in Makka can be evaluated from a Gramscian perspective. The Prophet spent all of his time in Makka educating and training early converts to Islam, and Qurānic revelation played a significant role in forming an alternative ideology through which the religio-ethical and socio-political authority of the pagans and their worldview might have been challenged. He specifically trained a group of individuals who could form an alternative intellectual and political leadership. However, subverting Makkan authority at this juncture proved impossible, and the Quraysh, due to their ability to mobilise the masses, successfully sustained their hegemony as well as their coercive power. For this reason, the Prophet Muḥammad decided to migrate to Medina where he could initiate his political struggle by making alliances with various Bedouin tribes. Through this strategy, he triumphed over the Makkans. As Afzaal notes: "In this context, the Gramscian recognition of the role of hegemony and coercion provides yet another way of conceptualizing the intimate relationship between the religio-ethical and socio-political spheres of activity in the career of Prophet Muḥammad."⁵²

⁵⁰Afzaal, "The Origin of Islam as a Social Movement", 241-242. Note: For a better appreciation of Gramsci's thought, cf., Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, trs. and eds., Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971); Joseph Femia, "Hegemony and Consciousness in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci" in *Political Studies*, Vol. 23 (1975), 29-48.

⁵¹Afzaal, "The Origin of Islam as a Social Movement", 240-241.

⁵²*ibid.*, 242.

Afzaal's work focuses on the study of the origins of Islam as a social movement. He uses modern tools of analysis to study the rise of Islam, and argues that Islam's contemporary social movements always attempt to legitimise their ideology, action, and strategy through judicious interpretation of the life and career of Prophet Muhammad, which the movement members then try to emulate. In such a context, apparently far-removed from the political, cultural and spiritual realities of Gramsci's milieu, the application of his ideas seems both innovative and promising.

In fact, the ʿAbbāsids, too, used precisely the strategy identified by Gramsci. Presenting their plan secretly in Iraq and Khurāsān without entering into the arena of political conflict to challenge the coercive machinery of the Umayyads, they showed their ideology to be alternative and counter-hegemonic. After invoking dissident feeling among the masses against the ruling class, they set about challenging the political authority of the Umayyads, who at this point attempted in vain to utilize their coercive power against the ʿAbbāsids. Marwān b. Muḥammad marched with a strong army but, having lost the consent of the masses, was defeated. While the Umayyads had lost popular support, the ʿAbbāsids presented their alternative counter-hegemonic ideology. They successfully challenged the religious legitimacy and political authority of the Umayyads, integrated all anti-Umayyad forces under their banner, and thus created a movement that was both religio-ethical and socio-political. With an active group of individuals and intellectuals and a strong organizational structure the ʿAbbāsids clearly met the criteria for a revolutionary force. Indeed, the three-fold scheme identified by Afzaal was undoubtedly a key to their success.

2.2.5 Legitimizing the State: Gramsci, Passive Revolution, and the Case of Senegal

Fatton attempted to analyse the process of liberalization by applying Gramsci's theory of hegemony and passive revolution to the West African state of Senegal, a peripheral capitalistic country where liberalisation occurred under the presidential rule of Leopold Sedar Senghor and his successor Abdou Diouf from 1974 to 1981. Many political reforms were introduced during this period; as Fatton notes, "the authoritarian structures of Senegal's political system were gradually

changed to accommodate the introduction of a rigid tripartite system of governance.”⁵³ The intention was to legitimise all political parties in order to defuse an organic crisis (i.e., crisis of the total structure) and to cope with the threat from the left. The process of liberalisation halted the growth of revolutionary forces, while reforms assisted the ruling class to reorganise and restructure without ceding command. Fatton notes that Senegal’s revolution represents what Gramsci called a passive revolution in which the ruling class successfully maintained its hegemony with the help of its organic intellectuals.⁵⁴ In Gramscian terms, passive revolution is a defensive move by the ruling class in response to the vital revolutionary demands of the ruled classes. Thus, in a passive revolution, the ruling class successfully reforms the existing structure of governance and presentation without introducing change in its own authority.⁵⁵

The ruling class of Senegal consisted of three traditional dominant groups: (i) the bourgeoisie which had had capital and was engaged in its accumulation; (ii) the traditional religious aristocracy or Marabouts who enjoyed the authority of their sacred dominance over the peasant class; and (iii) the bureaucratic bourgeoisie which controlled the state as an apparatus of repression and capital accumulation. They ruled Senegal by acquiring the ‘spontaneous consent’ of the masses. Because of their material lack, an organic crisis emerged, although this alone could not bring revolution, since the ruling class successfully reorganised the state structure by maintaining its previous power. A democratic government extracted power from authoritarian rulers using the politics of hegemony, but the ruling class remained in power, just as they had during authoritarian regimes. The democratisation of Senegal provides a striking example of passive revolution,⁵⁶ in which the organic intellectuals (i.e., those who spoke for the interests of a particular class) played a vital role

⁵³ Fatton, Robert Jr., “Gramsci and the Legitimization of the State: the Case of the Senegalese Passive Revolution”, *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique* (Canadian Political Science Association), Vol. 19, No. 4, Dec., 1986, pp. 729-750 at 729.

⁵⁴ Fatton, “Gramsci and the Legitimization of the State”, 730.

⁵⁵ Fatton, ‘Gramsci and the Legitimization of the State’, 731.

⁵⁶ Fatton comments: “Despite such a significant weakness, the ruling class demonstrated an exceptional amount of statecraft in preserving its domination. It affected a passive revolution which went beyond the promotion of its narrow and immediate corporate interests. Authoritarianism was displaced by the politics of hegemony, yet the structures of power remained fundamentally unchanged. This is precisely why the democratization of Senegal should be viewed as a successful passive revolution.” Fatton, ‘Gramsci and the Legitimization of the State’, 730.

in the formation of a new hegemony. To Gramsci, such intellectuals were the architects of legitimisation; they were basically ‘deputies’ of the ruling group and worked for their hegemony.⁵⁷

Fatton observes that although the organic intellectuals of Senegal presented an ideology fit for the purpose of elites and focused towards introducing significant politico-economic change, they did not challenge the traditional authority patterns of ruling and ruled classes. Instead, reforms were presented to address the socio-economic problems of the society in such a way that the state continued to be directed by its traditional authorities. However, the proposed method of democratisation facilitated the transformation of the traditional ruling class into a democratic ruling class.

Fatton suggests that in such circumstances the elite will identify its own interests and aspirations as well as those of the subaltern groups to bring about “not only a unison of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity.”⁵⁸ He concludes that a Gramscian conceptualisation of politics greatly assists an understanding of socio-political change in developing-country contexts. The reform process in Senegal can be interpreted and examined using Gramsci’s concept of passive revolution, organic crisis and organic intellectuals. The latter played a vital role in the formation of a new system where the traditional authority of the ruling class remained intact while an attempt was made to address the needs of masses without coming into conflict with the ruling class.

Fatton’s insights extend to the present study. Senegal’s democratisation process was undertaken to preserve the authority of the traditional ruling class. In the Umayyad era, ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-Azīz also attempted to pacify revolutionaries by introducing tax reforms and portraying himself as the custodian of religion. In so doing, he successfully maintained the authority of the Umayyads without changing the ruling class, and achieved this objective with the help of intellectuals who prepared the ground for the establishment of Umayyad legitimacy. Evidently, the reforms of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz also lend themselves to Gramscian analysis, with particular reference to the notion of passive revolution.

⁵⁷ Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 134-135, 145.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 739.

2.2.6 Religion and Politics in Gramsci

In questioning the role of religion in politics and society in light of Gramscian theory, John Fulton presents Gramsci's assessment of the historical development of human society and the relationship between religion and social structure, an approach that he regards as vital for understanding the relation between religion and politics. Gramsci values the role of religion in his theory of politics and also considers religion an important political force, directly related to the process of socialist revolution. Here, his term 'intellectual and moral reformation' is useful in understanding the dynamics of power in society.⁵⁹ As Fulton notes: "...religion is seen by Gramsci to have a direct relationship to the socialist revolution and to revolutionary forms in general. In any event, religion is always a political force."⁶⁰ Gramsci also gives importance to cultural life in all socio-economic processes and economic production, regarding production as mental as well as physical. In Marxist terms, 'material infrastructure' and 'cultural superstructure' are closely linked.⁶¹ In Gramsci's view, both concepts "co-determine the socio-political and ethical values in a dialectical rather than a linear or causal sense", which is particularly relevant for the study and analysis of Western democracies.⁶² He recognises the coercive role of the state in a Western Capitalist democracy capable of acquiring the cultural power of civil society, a combination that provides a solid foundation for consolidating power in a Western democratic context, and asserts that socialism cannot prevail in Western countries through coercive power. Such a dramatic change can only occur through an 'intellectual and moral reformation'. This concept derives from his understanding of historical Christianity which has experienced its own particular reformation in both areas.⁶³

Fulton details Gramsci's description of the power relationship between historical religions and social structure according to five categories: folklore, religion of the people or popular religion, common sense, the religion of intellectuals, and philosophy. The last two are particularly related to his concept of hegemony, while all five can be broadly divided into two groups: (i) religion of

⁵⁹ Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 732, 733.

⁶⁰ Fulton, John, 'Religion and Politics in Gramsci: An Introduction', in *Sociological Analysis*, Vol. 48. No. 3 (Oxford University Press, 1987) 197-216 at 198.

⁶¹ See for details, Marx, K., *The Early Texts*, ed. D. McClellan, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971).

⁶² Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 238.

⁶³ *ibid.*, 328, 329.

the people and religion of the intellectuals (or the domain of religion); and (ii) common sense and philosophy (or the domain of culture). Folklore is placed within both groups. The term ‘religion of people’ denotes the belief, morals and experiences of various groups of people such as the subaltern or dependent classes: workers, peasants, etc. Their beliefs determine their actions and relationships.⁶⁴

Gramsci argues that popular religion and common sense are closely linked with each other. Neither concept is logically consistent or coherent; rather they exist with contradictions. According to this view, people live with their popular religion which includes such contradictions and their common sense helps them to live with these contradictions without realising their intensity. Meanwhile, philosophy and the religion of intellectuals are both related to the process of power and control, i.e., hegemony and coercion, while the state and civil society are structures designed and oriented to assist the dominant ruling classes to extend their power over the people of the state as a whole. ‘Organic intellectuals’ are defined as a group of people who construct and develop hegemonic values and administer the state’s coercive *modus operandi*, and consist of various ranks and professions, including judges, civil servants, politicians, religious leaders, teachers and philosophers.⁶⁵ Gramsci studied religion in the context of Christianity, which maintained a passive revolutionary character in the Roman Empire. However, during the Europe’s Middle Ages the church became part of the hegemonic alliance, as many senior clerics belonged to the aristocracy and played important roles in the establishment of the monastic system and feudalism. Gramsci viewed the medieval hegemony of high-ranking clerics as combining both social and cultural structures, with the clergy as the ‘collective intellectual’ for the medieval structure.⁶⁶

In response to the Reformation and Counter-Reformation movements, the papacy had changed its power structure and the church’s role as organic intellectual also changed. Gramsci refers to this situation as “the point of breakdown between democracy and the church”.⁶⁷ Unable to make an alliance with the emerging secular ruling class, the church lost its traditional authority and instead

⁶⁴ Fulton, ‘Religion and Politics in Gramsci’, 203.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, 204-405.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, 209.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, 210.

allied itself with superseded Royalist factions and the peasantry, eventually becoming a centre for the ‘traditional intellectual’.⁶⁸ Fulton gives prominence to Gramsci’s sociological interpretations of religion, and his special attention to the relationship between religion and power in society. Similarly, this thesis seeks to contribute to a scholarly understanding of the role of intellectuals in the Umayyads’ rise and ultimate decline.

2.3 Description of the Classical Sources

2.3.1 Al-Ya‘qūbī’s *Tārīkh al-Ya‘qūbī*

Aḥmad b. Ya‘qūb al-Ya‘qūbī (d. 284/897) was a well-known historian and geographer famed for his pro-‘Alid ideology and hostility toward the Umayyad reign. His treatment of ‘Abd al-Malik’s period reflected his own views. For instance, when reporting how ‘Abd al-Malik ascended to the throne, he gave his genealogy, commenting that his grandfathers had been expelled from Medina by the Prophet,⁶⁹ and similarly revealed many reports depicting ‘Abd al-Malik as a tyrant and oppressor.⁷⁰ So strong were Al-Ya‘qūbī’s pro-‘Alid feelings that his historiography displayed a marked antagonism towards all who had opposed the ‘Alids. For instance, he narrated many unflattering episodes featuring Ibn Zubayr, particularly regarding his unstable relations with Ibn Hanafīya and Ibn ‘Abbās, and also criticised Ibn Zubayr and his brother Muṣ‘ab for suppressing the Shi‘ī supporters of al-Mukhtār,⁷¹ while describing Ibn Zubayr’s successful garnering of support from the people of Medina.⁷²

Although such bias suggests a hostile temperament and aggressive manner, al-Ya‘qūbī’s *Tārīkh* does contain valuable information about the social structure of the society, and gives a detailed description of the Umayyad administration, ending the account of each caliph with a list of the officiating governors and theologians. Nevertheless the bias in his reports can hardly be overstated,

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, 211.

⁶⁹ Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Tārīkh*, (al-Najaf: Maṭb‘at al-Ghurā, 1358 A.H.), 320/2.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, 336/2.

⁷¹ *ibid.*, 315/2.

⁷² *ibid.*, 320-330/2.

and it is therefore advisable to study his historiography alongside a contrastive revision of the context of each report.

2.3.2 Al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-al-Mulūk*

Tārīkh al-ruṣul wa-al-mulūk by al-Ṭabarī is considered the best anthology of historical records of the early Muslim era. Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) collected detailed accounts of the Muslim Caliphate, its expansion and organizational structure and also reported the events that led to its collapse. His treatment of the Umayyads is particularly comprehensive because of its focus on Iraq and the eastern provinces, where the Umayyads faced harsh opposition and revolts. He compiled his work on a chronological basis, illustrating the events of each year. Although al-Ṭabarī's early training in the methodology of Prophetic tradition led him to maintain this method as well in his historical collections, he was not strict about following and applying traditionalist rules as a means of verifying the text and chain of authority.⁷³ Indeed, Tarif Khalidi characterises him as the “imam of ḥadīth historiography”.⁷⁴

Al-Ṭabarī devotes a reasonable portion of his history to the Umayyads. The sources for his historiography of this period consist mainly of the reports of Abū Mikhnaḥ, ʿAwāna ibn al-Ḥakam, Madāʾinī, and al-Wāqidi, and he relies upon these four authorities for the relevance of their individual expertise in the regions. Thus he followed Abū Mikhnaḥ when considering the affairs of the eastern provinces, Iraq, and Kūfa, but on Syrian affairs derived most of his narratives from ʿAwāna b. al-Ḥakam. Similarly, he depended upon Madāʾinī's reports regarding the Khurāsān and Basra, whereas he accepted al-Wāqidi's reports about the divergent affairs of ʿAbd al-Malik, ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Zubayr and his brother Muṣʿab b. Zubayr, and al-Mukhtār and the late Umayyads.

The authority and credibility of these four sources are not equal. Abū Mikhnaḥ is usually considered to be an unbiased narrator, albeit sympathising with the ʿAlids and inclined towards Azd, his own tribe. Similarly, al-Madāʾinī is regarded as a reliable source, a status also confirmed

⁷³ Dūrī, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, “The Iraq School of History to the Ninth Century: a Sketch”, in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. M. P. Holt and B. Lewis (Oxford: 1964), 53.

⁷⁴ Khalidi, Tarif, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 73.

by modern scholarship.⁷⁵ ʿAwāna, on the other hand, views the Umayyads more favourably, a obvious predisposition that can be seen, for instance, in his treatment of the Umayyad propagation of a theological doctrine of predestination (jabr) in public affairs; as a result, predestination features prominently in ʿAwāna’s accounts. Meanwhile Wāqidī does not appear to have favoured any particular party, even though a distinctly positive view of Ibn Zubayr can be detected without much difficulty. Ibn Nadīm also accused him of being a partisan of the ʿAlids,⁷⁶ a claim which could not be substantiated by documents.⁷⁷

Al-Ṭabarī’s historiographical accounts of the Umayyad period are generally considered reliable and authentic, and his Tārīkh provides relatively comprehensive information on the late Umayyad period. By contrast, most reports written by al-Madāʾinī, one of the earliest sources of the Umayyad period, have been lost. Fortunately, however, al-Ṭabarī has preserved al-Madāʾinī’s work in his Tārīkh, which now represents the principal source of al-Madāʾinī’s work. Long established as the most important historiographer of early Islamic history, al-Ṭabarī has had a tremendous impact on subsequent historiography, and his presentation of historical accounts is usually considered objective and unbiased, but although A. H. Duri regards him as even-handed and impartial in the presentation of his sources, such praise does not signify al-Ṭabarī’s complete lack of agenda. His endeavour to construct Muslim historiography sought to illustrate the oneness of the prophetic mission and the continuity of the umma, in which history was presented as the “expression of divine will”.⁷⁸ Khalidī concedes that al-Ṭabarī was involved in theological disputes with the Qadarites of his own time, but denies that his presentation of history reflected his own views on such matters.⁷⁹ Franz Rosenthal also suggests that a certain bias is reflected in al-Ṭabarī’s omission of some anti-ʿAbbāsīd materials.⁸⁰

In relation to the late Umayyads, however, al-Ṭabarī’s representation appears less than completely authentic. He relied almost exclusively on Iraqi sources for his description of the Umayyads

⁷⁵ Gibb, H. A. R. *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), 115.

⁷⁶ Ibn Nadīm, Muḥammad b. Ishaq, *Kitāb Fihrist*, ed. Riḍāʾ Tajaddud, (Tehran, 1971), 144.

⁷⁷ Al-Wāqidī, Muḥammad b. ʿUmar, *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, (Oxford, 1966), 18.

⁷⁸ Duri, A. H., *The Rise of Historical Writings*, 70.

⁷⁹ Khalidī, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 80.

⁸⁰ Rosenthal, Franz, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 2nd rev. ed., (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 135.

period, reflecting his regional bias and partiality, while his information about Damascus, the centre of Syria, arrived via Iraqī reporters who had not personally witnessed events. Donner criticises al-Ṭabarī, claiming that around eighty percent of his narratives concerning Syria were derived from Iraqī sources, and that he had ignored the more readily available Syrian sources,⁸¹ while Judd notes that “the history of Umayyad Syria is presented almost exclusively through Iraqī sources. While these sources may not have been overtly hostile to the Umayyads regime, they do offer a rather limited perspective.”⁸² Regardless of all these deficiencies, al-Ṭabarī had a tremendous impact on later and modern works about the Umayyad decline, as this thesis discusses later.

2.3.3 Al-Masʿūdī's *Murūj al-Dhahab* and *Tanbīh wa-al-Ishrāf*

Among more than thirty-five books written by the famous historian, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ḥusayn Al-Masʿūdī (d. 345/956), only the two titles mentioned above have survived. Renowned for his pro-ʿAlid and anti-Umayyad assessment, al-Masʿūdī depended mostly on the Shīʿī reports, while his judgement of ʿAbd al-Malik simply repeated al-Yaʿqūbī's understanding. Most of his themes are derived from al-Yaʿqūbī's *Mushākalāt al-nās li-zamānihim*, though without proper acknowledgement.⁸³ Similarly, he portrays al-Ḥajjāj as the biggest tyrant of his time on the basis of the reports coming to him from Shīʿī sources such as al-Minqarī and Ibn Aʿisha.⁸⁴

In his attempts to depict the social and intellectual conduct of society, al-Masʿūdī's elaboration of history in *Murūj al-Dhahab* is anecdotal. *Murūj* is also an important source for the study of the relationship of al-Mukhtār and Ibn Zubayr with both Ibn al-Ḥanfīya and Ibn ʿAbbās and with ʿAlī b. Husayn. These accounts are vital for establishing an authentic and reliable understanding of the nature of their relationships. Al-Masʿūdī's reports on internal tribal conflicts are useful for evaluating the context of the battle of Marj Rāhiṭ (in 684 AD) and how Marwān secured the southern Arabs in that encounter. Such narratives assist greatly in understanding the nature of

⁸¹ Donner, Fred “The Problem of Early Arabic Historiography in Syria”, *Proceedings of the Second Symposium on the History of Bilād al-Shām During the early Islamic Period up to 40AH/640 AD.* Ed. M.A. Bakhit, (Amman: University of Jordan, 1987), 1-2, 20-23.

⁸² Judd, *The Third Fitna*, 58.

⁸³ Masʿūdī, ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, ed. Qāsim Wahb, (Damascus: Manshūrāt wizārat al-Thaqāfa, 1988), 210/5.

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, 288-360/5; 326/8; 338, 343; 290-302/9.

internal conflicts among Arab tribes, and the formation of political development under the reign of Marwān and ʿAbd al-Malik.⁸⁵

Al-Masʿūdī criticised almost all the Umayyad rulers except ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, whom he dignified with the title of Caliph, while the periods of rule of all the other Umayyad rulers were referred to as “the kingdom” (mulk) or simply “the days” (ayyām). This reflects Masʿūdī’s low regard for their claims to legitimacy and his dismissal of their authority to rule. In his view, they established their hegemony through tyranny and a gullible wider society. He portrays most of the Umayyads as despicable: ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 65-86/687-705) is shown as a tyrant and blood-thirsty; Sulaymān (r. 96-99/714-717) had immersed himself in pleasures and amusement; Hishām (r. 105-125/723-742) was ferocious and ingenuous; and Walīd II (r. 125-126/742-743) was an infidel.⁸⁶ He also notes the verdict of an Umayyad family member regarding the collapse of Umayyad rule:

We were diverted by pleasures from devoting ourselves to what needed our attention. So we were unjust to our subjects and they despaired of our justice and wished to be rid of us. Taxpayers, overburdened with taxation, abandoned us. Our domains fell into decay, our treasuries were empty. We trusted our ministers but they preferred their own interests to ours and conducted the affairs of state independently of us and without our knowledge. We were late in paying our soldiers so they overthrew their allegiance. When our enemies called them, they made common cause with them and warred against us. We sought out our enemies but could not apprehend them because our followers were few. The fact that the news was hidden from us was one of the most important reasons for the overthrow of our kingdom.⁸⁷

Injustice thus emerges as a key reason for the ending of the Umayyads’ reign. Al-Masʿūdī also points out that injustice led to unrest and socio-economic decay, culminating in disintegration. The Nizārī-Yemenī rivalries were also a cause of the Umayyad decline. On the basis of this discussion, al-Masʿūdī’s consciously pro-ʿAlid stance regarding Umayyad rule and their fall may be inferred without difficulty.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*, 336-341, 347-354/2.

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, 390, 384, 406, 413, 418/2.

⁸⁷ Masʿūdī, *Muruj*, 425/2 tr. by Khalidī, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 129.

However, al-Mas'ūdī's *Tanbīh* is an attempt to deliver advanced knowledge and fresh thinking to the evaluation and assessment of early Muslim history. He presents a detailed list of Kuttāb, Ḥājibs and Qadīs at the end of each caliph's account.⁸⁸ and in contrast to *Murūj*, it seems that in *Tanbīh* he had paid attention to the Umayyad sources, since, after meticulous analysis and criticism, he challenges the reliability of these sources as being hostile to the 'Alids.

2.3.4 Ibn Athīr's al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh

'Izz al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Abī al-Karam Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Shaybānī, known as Ibn Athīr, was born in Iraq in 555/1160. He migrated with his family from Jazīra to Musul before 574/1178, and having settled there in 576/1180, became a leading scholar in ḥadīth, history, and genealogy. His book al-Kāmil, which is regarded as one of the important chronicles of medieval Muslim history,⁸⁹ contains significant information about Umayyad rule. The process of Arab historiography had reached its pinnacle during the third and fourth century AH, and historians of this era had compiled comprehensive chronicles on the basis of available information. As a consequence, Ibn al-Athīr broadened the scope of historiography. By compiling his history in a chronological manner, he could give details of important personalities and information about various events at the end of each year's account.

Ibn Athīr's work is particularly distinguished by its clarity. He utilised various early historical sources for the compilation of al-Kāmil: however, most of his information was derived from Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī's history, with much data added from other historical sources. Mahmood ul-Hassan asserts that al-Ṭabarī was a primary source for Ibn Athīr's history but that he utilised many other sources wherever the authenticity of Ṭabarī's information was doubtful or incomplete.⁹⁰

Ibn Athīr presents a consistent narrative of the Umayyads, chronicling how their reign came into existence on the basis of reconciliation and agreement between Mu'āwiya and Ḥasan b. 'Alī in the

⁸⁸ Mas'ūdī, 'Alī b. al-Ḥusain, *Tanbīh al-Ishrāf*, (Leiden, 1894), 313-314.

⁸⁹ Ibn Khllakān, Abū al-'Abbās Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad, *Wafiyyāt al-'Ayān wa-Anbā' Abnā' al-Zamān*, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās, (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir), 348-350/3.

⁹⁰ Mahmood ul-Hasan, Ibn al-Athīr: An Arab Historian, A Critical Analysis of his Tarikh al-Kamil and Tarikh al-Atabeca, (New Delhi: Northern Book Centre, 2005), 106.

year 41/611.⁹¹ He presents Mu‘āwīya as a ruler who consistently and vigorously engaged in civil wars, particularly with the Khawārij, and reports the details of Yazīd’s succession in the year 60/679 after Mu‘āwīya’s death, and also illustrated the tragedy of Hussayn in detail.⁹² He recounts the events of Marwān and ‘Abd al-Malik and the manner in which they established their rule by defeating Ibn Zubayr and the Khawārij, and eulogizes al-Walīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik for his great achievements, narrating many reports in this regard.⁹³ Sulaymān b. ‘Abd al-Malik damaged Umayyad rule by killing key commanders such as Qutayba b. Muslim and Muḥammad b. Qāsim.⁹⁴ However, Ibn Athīr reported that the Syrians praised ‘Abd al-Malik for his generosity and kindness, describing him as “the key of good and accomplishment”.⁹⁵

Certainly Ibn Athīr appears impartial and unprejudiced in his treatment of the Umayyads. He narrates many prophetic traditions in favour of the Mu‘āwīya,⁹⁶ and similarly praises al-Walīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik for his exceptional services, such as construction of mosques and expansion of empire towards Andalusia, India and Kashghar.⁹⁷ He acknowledges ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz as a pious and faithful man who forbade the Umayyads to curse ‘Alī b. ‘Abī Talib,⁹⁸ and played a vital role in preaching Islam in the newly-conquered regions such as Sind.⁹⁹ The ‘Abbasid movement, perhaps because of his tolerance, thrived across Umayyad rule under the leadership of Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās.¹⁰⁰

Yazīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik who came to power in 101/719 continued to fight the Khawārij and succeeded in suppressing them. Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik (d. 125/ 742) had to face many challenges, the most significant being the growing ‘Abbāsīd movement which was advancing across the caliphate. In his twenty-year rule, he attempted to save the Umayyad dynasty; however

⁹¹ Ibn Athīr *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, (Beirut: Dar al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 2004), 5-8/3.

⁹² *ibid.*, 157-196/3.

⁹³ *ibid.*, 70/4.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, 62-63, 72/ 4.

⁹⁵ *ibid.*, 94/4.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, 124-127/3.

⁹⁷ *ibid.*, 70/4.

⁹⁸ *ibid.*, 98/4.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, 109/4.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, 107-108/4.

their authority was usurped within seven years of his death. Ibn Athīr records the reports that criticised al-Walīd b. Yazīd but also gives space to reports portraying his resilience, political acumen, and literary flair.¹⁰¹ Ibn Athīr's history suggests that the conflict within the house of the Umayyads after the death of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik led to their fall. He chooses to record the fall and general massacre of the Umayyad family, whereas al-Ṭabarī makes no mention of this. Curiously, However, Ibn Athīr relied heavily upon al-Ṭabarī's history while compiling his own account.¹⁰²

2.3.5 Ibn Khaldūn's *Diwān al-Mubtadā'* known as *Tārīkh Ibn Khaldūn*

ʿAbd al-Raḥman Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1405) was a historian who presented a much-celebrated philosophy of history.¹⁰³ He lived a life of rich and diverse experiences and was closely associated with elites and ruling classes, enabling him to understand the practicalities of politics and to analyse history in a broader perspective. He began his political career by attaching himself in 754/1353 to al-Sulṭān Abī ʿInān (d. 759/1358), a Marinid ruler, in Tilimsān,¹⁰⁴ working at the royal court until the ruler's death. Ibn Khaldūn was also appointed ambassador for Sultan Abū Sālim Ibrāhīm al-Marīnī¹⁰⁵ and stayed with Sulṭān ʿAbd Allah al-Thālith Ibn Aḥmar and his minister Ibn Khaṭīb in Cordoba in 764/1362.¹⁰⁶ Appointed as justice in Mālikī jurisprudence in Cairo in 782/1384,¹⁰⁷ he came to Alexandria during the reign of Sultan Barqūq (d. 801/1398). Ibn Khaldūn

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*, 306-309/4.

¹⁰² *ibid.*, 282-399/4.

¹⁰³ Al-Sakhawī, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, *al-Dawʿ al-Lāmiʿ li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsiʿ*, (Beirut: Dār Maktabah al-Ḥayāt, 1966), 145/2; al-Shawkānī, *al-Badr al-Ṭālīʿ bi-Mahāsin min baʿd al-Qarn al-Sābiʿ*, (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, 1978), 337/1.

¹⁰⁴ Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Taʿrīf bi-Ibn Khaldūn wa-Rihlatuh Gharban wa-Sharqan*, ed. Muḥammad b. Tāwīt al-Ṭanjī, (Cairo: Lajnah al-Talīf wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzīʿ, 1408 AH), 58-59.

¹⁰⁵ Al-Nāṣirī, Aḥmad ibn Khālid, *Kitāb al-Istiḳṣāʾ li-Akhhbār duwal al-Maghrib al-Aqṣā*, (al-Dār al-Bauḍāʾ: Dār al-Kitāb, 1954-56), 7/4.

¹⁰⁶ Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Taʿrīf*, 84; Ibn Khaṭīb, Lisān al-Dūn Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh, *al-Iḥāṭa fī Akhhbār Gharnāṭa*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd Allah ʿInān, (Cairo: Maktaba al-Khānji, 1393 AH), 499/3.

¹⁰⁷ Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Taʿrīf*, 254-255; al-Maqrīzī, Aḥmad b. ʿAlī, *Khīṭaṭ al-Miqrīzī*, (Miṣr, Bawlāq, 1980), 333/3.

also met the Central Asian conqueror, Taymūr Lang (also known as Timur), for whom he wrote a book.¹⁰⁸

He studied Muslim civilisation as the continuity of human civilization and presented various parameters for the study of socio-political and religious development, in addition to studying the rise and fall of different civilizations and regimes, which he analysed objectively by devising specific regulations based on reason and logic. His history, which contains important information about the rise and fall of the Umayyads, provides extensive information about their socio-political and religious life, and his analysis of the main factors that contributed to their demise is of considerable significance for this thesis .

Ibn Khaldūn analyses Umayyad rule from various dimensions. He presents his theory of *‘aṣabīya* as central to the rise and fall of tribal-based societies. In his view, the Umayyads came to power because of their greater *‘aṣabīya*, larger tribe, and superior financial resources compared with other tribes of Quraysh. They established their authority over all the Arab tribes because of their genealogical connection to *‘Abd Munāf*.¹⁰⁹ Certainly, *‘aṣabīya* appears to have played a central role in establishing Umayyad rule. Ibn Khaldūn describes the reasons for the weakening of *‘aṣabīya* among the tribes that eventually led a ruler to fall, emphasizing the internal conflict within the Umayyad family as the basic reason for their fall, and analysing the causes of conflict between Umayyad family members.

He evaluates the reports of early historians on a rational basis and rejects all those found lacking in logic, e.g., the reports that illustrated the immorality of al-Walīd b. Yazīd. According to Ibn Khaldūn, such reports were biased and motivated by jealousy. He reports the *‘Abbāsīd* caliph al-Mahdī’s comment that al-Walīd b. Yazīd was the focus of jealousy, particularly from his cousins who fought him.¹¹⁰ Ibn Khaldūn characterises the fall of the Umayyads as the fall of the Arab people, since the *‘Abbasids* came to power with the aid of non-Arabs with whom power had to be shared, thereby making autonomy impossible. Ibn Khaldūn’s historiography is rich not only in

¹⁰⁸ Ibn Ḥajr al-*‘Asqalānī*, *Raf‘ al-Iṣr ‘an Quḍāt Miṣr*, ed. Ḥāmid *‘Abd al-Ḥamīd* (Cairo: al-Maṭbah al-Amīriyah 1998), 346.

¹⁰⁹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh Ibn Khaldūn*, 755-757/2.

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*, 132/3.

important historical information but also in his dedication to presenting a philosophy and rationale for the events chronicled.

2.4 Description of the Modern Sources

2.4.1 Jurjī Zaydān's History of Islamic Civilisation

Jurjī Zaydān (1861–1914) was a prolific Lebanese writer, whose *History of Islamic Civilization* was translated by D. S. Margoliouth. Though the book does not focus specifically on the study of the Umayyad period, its three main sections cover the Pious Caliphs, the Umayyads and the ʿAbbāsids. Zaydān argued that the period of the pious caliphs was dominated by Arab elements and Islamic values in the affairs of their rule, while the Umayyad period was a manifestation of Arab chauvinism, during which Islamic principles were not a matter of concern.¹¹¹ He views elements such as hegemony, sovereignty and autocracy as the fundamentals of Umayyad politics. Zaydān also evaluates the ways in which the pre-Islamic internal conflicts of the Yemenites and Muḍarites contributed to ʿAlī-Muʿāwīya's relations and its later manifestation in the multiple revolts of Ibn Zubayr, al-Mukhtār and Khārijites during the period of ʿAbd al-Malik,¹¹² referring to al-Masʿūdī, famed for his pro-ʿAlid thinking, to validate his argument.¹¹³ His early investigation of the sources inspired later scholars, such as Julius Wellhausen, Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, who sought to evaluate Umayyad history more systematically along these lines.

Zaydān argues that in Umayyad times the Quraysh gained a central position among the Arab tribes, while the Arabs on the whole became supreme over the subject nations. The people of the dynasty were divided by the relationship of the Arabs and the Clients, under which Arab chauvinism flourished.¹¹⁴ On this basis, Zaydān criticises the Umayyads whom he considers the usurpers of the Caliphate which should rightfully have been led by the Ahl al-bayt (the Prophet's family). In order to prove his argument, he derived many sources from the books of pro-ʿAlid historians such as al-Masʿūdī and Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih's *al-ʿIqd al-Farīd*. He analyses the violence and brutality of

¹¹¹ Zaydan, *History of Islamic Civilisation*, trs. D.S. Margoliouth, Kitāb Bhavan, (Delhi: Fine Press, 1978), 1.

¹¹² *ibid.*, 66-69.

¹¹³ *ibid.*, 66.

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*, 69.

the Umayyads in the eastern provinces, particularly in Iraq during the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik who encouraged al-Ḥajjāj ruthlessly to suppress rebellions and revolts, and concludes that the Umayyad dynasty was an Arab dynasty based on the clan-patriotism of the Quraysh and on winning partisans, a policy that resulted in fragmentation and division of the society and in turn produced the potential for further revolts and rebellions.¹¹⁵

For Zaydān, each of the pre-Islamic conflicts (Qaysīs versus Kalbīs, Muḍarīs versus Yemenīs, and Nizar versus Qaḥṭān) constituted an important factor in the Umayyad collapse,¹¹⁶ and in his view, factionalism was a dominant feature of the administrative and political structure of the Umayyads, where every tribal group supported his own group.¹¹⁷ Zaydan further comments that the traditional power structure of the early Umayyads shifted in the reign of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik, who favoured the Qaysīs. During his rule, the Qaysīs were the dominant party. Marwān b. Muḥammad, last of the Umayyad rulers, also attempted to secure the support of Qaysīs to avenge the death of al-Walīd b. Yazīd, whose mother was from the Qays tribe. Marwān successfully won their support, but on the other hand, the Yemenīs favoured the ʿAbbāsids in their struggle against the Umayyads. In this context, Zaydan considers factionalism a key contributor to the fall of the Umayyads, and highlights a situation where the later Umayyad rulers could not maintain the equilibrium between the power structure of the Qaysīs and Yemenīs. Moreover, they tormented the Yemenīs, who were the primary source of their power against their traditional opponents.¹¹⁸ Zaydān’s work can be considered a good presentation of the pro-ʿAlid standpoint, which is used for comparative studies of modern sources.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, 138-141.

¹¹⁶ Banū Kalb were Yemenīs from Southern Arabia who had migrated to Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine almost three centuries before Islam emerged in Hijāz. The Umayyads were from Banū Qays, but had established close connections with the Yemenites in order to win their favour against the Qaysīs. As Muʿāwīya had married a Kalbite woman, who became the mother of his son, Yazīd, the Kalbīs supported Yazīd after Muʿāwīya’s death. The battle of Marj Rāhiṭ (in 684 CE) further reflected the tribes’ mutual antagonism: thus, where Ibn Zubair relied on the Qaysīs, Marwān’s army consisted of Yemenite soldiers.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, 66-67.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*, 69.

2.4.2 Julius Wellhausen's *The Arab Kingdom and its Fall*

Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918) is one of the most interesting personalities in the field of modern Umayyad historiography, and his book, *The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall*, has greatly influenced the subsequent literature produced on the subject. He had introduced a specific method of source analysis for studying the books of the Bible, which he then employed in reconstructing Umayyad history. The early sources on the Umayyads were generally composed during the ʿAbbāsīd period, and display a consistently anti-Umayyad stance. To analyse the plethora of early Muslim histories, Wellhausen applied his source analysis method, according to which every report was assessed through analysis of the narrator, his special religious affiliation, and adherence to his particular school of thought. By using this method, Wellhausen's history became much less hostile towards the Umayyads, emphasising instead their organisational and administrative structures.

The intellectual insights and wisdom of Wellhausen's book were important for the present research and are still valuable for further investigation. His introduction describes the Arabs' tribal and political context and the rise of the Arab caliphate from the inception of Islam. Examining the internal conflicts and uprisings during ʿUthmān's reign, and between ʿAlī and Muʿāwīya, and then among Ibn Zubayr, al-Mukhtār and the Marwānids, Wellhausen also evaluates the degree to which violence was instigated and intensified through intra-tribal conflicts. According to his research, pre-Islamic conflict between the Qaysīs and Kalbīs incited the rebellions that occurred during the early history of the Muslims, and he traces their origins from the historic conflict of Marj Rāhiṭ in the ʿAbd al-Malik period.¹¹⁹ He also evaluates the mawālī movement from a socio-economic perspective, highlighting their humiliation and unjust treatment under the repressive rule of the early Marwānids, when Al-Ḥajjāj imposed a poll tax on the numerous mawālīs who had embraced Islam. Implementation of this policy caused a dramatic and bloody rebellion among the mawālīs, but although al-Ḥajjāj suppressed these revolts with military rule, they continued to re-emerge in different forms.

¹¹⁹ Wellhausen, Julius. *Das Arabische Reich und sein Sturz*, Berlin, 1902, tr. M. G. Weir as *Arab Kingdom and its Fall* (London: Curzon Press, 1927), 201.

Wellhausen emphasises ‘Abd al-Malik’s integrity and commanding abilities, arguing that his economic reforms, such as introducing Arab coinage, were highly instrumental in attaining freedom from the supremacy of Byzantine currency. Similarly, his construction of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem was an innovative approach to creating a tremendous cultural and religious impact in the Syrian-Byzantine milieu. Moreover, in Wellhausen’s view, introducing Arabic as an official language was an important strategic shift towards Arab domination. Wellhausen strives to be comprehensive in his analysis of the events resulting in the decline of the Umayyads, which he interprets in the context of Arab-Persian conflicts, as noted above.

2.4.3 Daniel C. Dennett: Conversion and the Poll Tax in Early Islam & Marwān b. Muhammad: the Passing of the Umayyads Caliphate.

Dennett’s book includes the major portions of his 1939 doctoral dissertation: “Marwān b. Muhammad: The Passing of the Umayyads Caliphate”. He evaluated the origin and development of the taxation system of the late Umayyad period, studied the effects of this system on the imperial government, and analysed administrative institutions, particularly the Umayyad army, along with a biography of Marwān b. Muḥammad and a critique of his rule.¹²⁰

He shows the diversity of conditions prevailing across the Arab Caliphate, evaluating the development of tax systems in the Sawād, in Mesopotamia, Syria and Egypt, and Khurāsān, in which respect he challenged the theories of German orientalists such as C. F. Becker and Wellhausen (the latter’s work, while undeniably impressive, features a number of generalisations and Dennett’s robust critique of these is justified).¹²¹ Indeed, he rejected the view that *kharāj* and *jizya* were synonymous in all cases and declined Becker’s statement on the original taxation

¹²⁰ Dennett, *Marwān b. Muhammad*, xiii.

¹²¹ Frye admires Dennett’s criticism of German orientalists who had argued that Muslim Arabs did not differentiate between the land and poll tax in the early period of Islam; that the conversion to Islam freed the converts from all tributes; and that Nasr b. Sayyār, the governor of Khurāsān, reformed the taxation system so that all people, regardless of their religious identity, had to pay the land tax, while the poll tax was implemented only on non-Muslims. See Richard N. Frye, Review on “Conversion and the Poll Tax in Early Islam by Daniel C. Dennett”, *Speculum*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (April, 1952), 214-215

implemented by ʿAmr in Egypt, arguing instead that ʿAmr had also reinstated the Byzantine system of assessment.¹²²

Dennett criticised Hishām's failure to remove al-Walīd II from succession in favour of his own sons,¹²³ but blamed Yazīd III for the demise of the Umayyad caliphate, arguing that in challenging the authority of al-Walīd II, Yazīd undermined the foundation of the regime, further asserting that Yazīd II's political stance was based on "almost pure Khārijism". Yazīd II had attempted to establish his rule on the basis of an elective system which restricted the caliph from exercising his authority independently, and ultimately led to internal disputes and rebellions.¹²⁴ Dennett saw the decentralised structure of the Umayyad administration as a prominent element in the collapse of their rule. Under this system, the provinces were semi-autonomous entities and contributed little financially to the central government treasury. In this context, the caliph had to rely exclusively upon the Syrian military.¹²⁵ The assassination of al-Walīd II not only undermined the authority of the caliphate institution, but also led to the Syrian army's disintegration, since it could not remain united during dissension in the royal family and lost much of its power.

Ultimately, Marwān b. Muḥammad, assisted by his army in al-Jazīra, destroyed the Syrian army whose traditional authority collapsed; political power then shifted from Damascus to Jazīra. Dennett argued that the ʿAbbāsīd movement succeeded not because of its achievement in the Khurāsān, but because destruction of the Syrian army gave the ʿAbbāsīds an opportunity to fill the power vacuum.¹²⁶ He described Yazīd III as a villain and scoundrel who had sworn allegiance to al-Walīd II and then violated it, and this violation of the rule of succession led to the ultimate disintegration of the dynasty. Dennett also researched the life and role of Marwān b. Muḥammad,

¹²² Daniel Dennett, *Conversion and the Poll Tax in Early Islam*, (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950), 1-2, 45, 88, 256. Dennett also discards the notion that the early financial deficits occurred because the converts to Islam were exempted from all poll-tax, suggesting that it was precisely the mass migrations of peasantry to the cities that confirmed their non-exemption from the land tax, a hypothesis borne out by the number of conversions reported when the first ʿAbbāsīd caliph promised relief from the poll tax.

¹²³ Dennett, *Conversion*, 201.

¹²⁴ *ibid.*, 220.

¹²⁵ Kennedy, Hugh, "The Financing of the Military in the Early Islamic State", in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East, III: States, Resources and Armies*, ed. Averill Cameron, (Princeton NJ: Darwin Press, 1995), 361-378.

¹²⁶ Dennett, *Marwān*, 276.

describing him as a great leader and general who confronted many inherited complexities and difficulties. Both Dennett's works provide invaluable information and frameworks for the study of the late Umayyad period.

2.4.4 M.A. Shaban's Islamic History, A.D. 600-750 (A.H. 132) A New Interpretation

Shaban's new interpretation of Islamic history is regarded as one of the most credible additions to the modern historiography of the Umayyad rule. His methodology and treatment of the subject are useful for readers of the Umayyad period since he evaluates a wide range of Umayyad policies and their military and administrative institutions. In particular, he searches for the roots of the internal conflicts, revolts and conflicting forces of Arab tribalism, Khawārij and mawālī.

The early Arab settlements in the conquered lands, Shaban argues, caused the intra-Arab wars and anti-caliphal rebellions in Islam's early history. The early wars of ridda (apostasy campaigns after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad) divided the Arabs into supporters and enemies of the Medinian regime, which subsequently influenced caliphal policies. He analyses the non-ridda tribes who, after conquering Syria and Egypt, successfully liaised with local Kalb tribes. A strict policy of land distribution, limited exclusively to new settlers and already resident Arabs, brought political stability and harmony to the province. Meanwhile, Iraq had been conquered by a great miscellany of pre-Medinian Arab forces called 'qura'.¹²⁷ The influx of ridda tribes controlled the most power, while internal power struggles between ridda and qura' for power intensified, subsequently manifesting themselves in conflict during the time of 'Uthmān and 'Alī. Khārijism also emerged from the same power struggle, as did the revolts during 'Abd al-Malik's time. Unlike Wellhausen, who evaluated the events of this period in the context of pre-Islamic tribal conflicts, Shaban argues that economic and political interests played a significant role in the conflicts: "the events of this period have too often been explained on the basis of imaginary tribal jealousies or

¹²⁷ These were the people of the villages, i.e. the settled communities from the surrounding tribes of Mecca, Madina, Tā'if, but were later followed by the *ridda* tribes called '*radifa*', i.e., those who follow or come after. See Shaban, *Islamic History*, 23, 45.

irrational personal conflicts. Such explanations completely neglect the logical interests of the Arabs and severely underrate their normal human capability to adjust to new circumstances.”¹²⁸

Shaban divided the Umayyad caliphate into two vital regimes: the Sufyānid (from Mu‘āwiya to Mu‘āwiya II) and the Marwānids (from Marwān to the end of the Umayyads in 132/750), and identifies not only a difference involving a genealogical quibble, but also a significant difference “between the cautious rule of the Sufyānids and the authoritarianism of the Marwānids”.¹²⁹ He evaluates the political reforms and strategies of ‘Abd al-Malik and al-Ḥajjāj in order to resolve their internal and external conflicts, and examines ‘Abd al-Malik’s policies for establishing a centralised government. He also illustrates the manner in which al-Ḥajjāj gained a central position during the time of ‘Abd al-Malik and al-Walīd, particularly in the affairs of the eastern part of the Caliphate, as well as his introduction of social reforms after establishing peace and security in the region.

Although Shaban’s attempt to understand the nature of the activism characterising early Islamic history is insightful and productive, his historical focus does not correspond with that selected for the present study. He evaluates the policies of ‘Abd al-Malik and al-Ḥajjāj and regards the reign of al-Walīd as no more than the extension of ‘Abd al-Malik’s policies, while focusing on al-Ḥajjāj as the most important character during the early time of the Marwānids. In describing and analysing the collapse of the Marwānids, he argues that the disagreement of the royal family on the question of Walīd’s succession heralded the collapse of the most important element of the regime, the unity of the Marwānid family itself.¹³⁰ Marwān II attempted to establish his rule after the defeat of Ibrāhīm, but had to face opposition from many directions: Sulaymān b. Hishām with his private mawālīs army joined the Khawārij against Marwān. Secondly, the Shī‘ite movement sprang up there under the leadership of ‘Abd Allah b. Mu‘āwiya, a grandson of Ja‘far b. Ṭayyār. Shaban notes that Marwān II defeated both of these opponents: even then the latter’s appeal to the local mawālīs seems to have been considerable.¹³¹

¹²⁸ Wellhausen, *Arab Kingdom and its Fall*, viii.

¹²⁹ Shaban, *Islamic History*, 116.

¹³⁰ *ibid.*, 153.

¹³¹ *ibid.*, 161.

The social dissatisfaction of the mawālīs over the issue of equal rights and assimilation and the discontent of the Arab settlers over the war policy of the later Umayyads provoked the Khurāsānians to revolt. Shaban also claims that the economic interests of the Arab immigrants were not compatible with the expansionist policy of the later Umayyads. Thus, socio-economic interests made opponents of the rule more receptive to the Khurasanians. The Hāshimid- °Abbāsīd movement was initiated largely as a way of assimilating all members of the Muslim community under an equal system, an idea which inspired the successful overthrow of Marwānīd rule. It is interesting that Shaban, unlike Wellhausen who included Yemenite-Qaysite rivalries, gives more importance to the socio-economic elements that played a decisive role in the fall of the Umayyads.

2.4.5 E.A.Belyaev's Arabs, Islam and the Arab Caliphate in the Early Middle Ages

Translated from Russian, E. A. Belyaev's book does not focus exclusively on the Umayyad period, but covers Muslim history from the beginning to the middle of the ninth century. He analyses the early Arab conquest through a review of Byzantine and Sassanid historical perspectives, explains the geographical and socio-cultural milieu of the Arabs prior to the Prophet Muḥammad's establishment of a new religion, and gives an account of the subsequent maintenance of Muslim rule during the Rashidūn, Umayyad, and °Abbāsīd reigns. The most novel element of this book is its methodology, whereby Belyaev applies Marxist approaches of class and social relationships in order to evaluate the history of Islam. The Marxist approach observes how society evolves through the relationship of different classes in stages from primitive to communal, to slavery, to a feudal society. Belyaev claims that Byzantine society at the time of Islam's arrival was a slave society moving towards the formation of a proto-feudal society, while Arab society was at the primitive communal stage moving to a slave society during the same period. He observes another shift in the social order, that of a tribal Arab aristocracy becoming a class of feudal landlords. He also interprets internal Arab tribal conflicts and revolts from the ridda to Khawārij movements through a Marxist lens, emphasising the oppression of the weak by the strong. Presenting the Umayyads as oppressors, he views the Khawārij as the militant working class dissatisfied with their social and economic status. He devotes a chapter to the study of the Umayyad caliphate, outlines the ancient and modern sources for the Umayyad period and their implications, and describes the formation of the Umayyad dynasty, which in his view was founded at the time of the third caliph

Uthmān. He further maintains that Mu‘āwīya was considered to be its founder due to the orthodox status of ‘Alī in this context. ‘Abd al-Malik and al-Walīd’s reigns are considered highly significant, not least because of their control over the rule and successful construction of an entire hegemony over their internal and external opposition. ‘Abd al-Malik and al-Walīd introduced many reforms such as the coining of money and the status of Arabic as the official language of the caliphate, giving further protection to their hegemonic ambitions.¹³² Significantly, Belyaev observes a strategic shift in the policies of control, “from military occupation to orderly administration of subject countries, which direct control of the economic and political life.”¹³³

From the eighth century, the ruling aristocracy was evolving into a dominant Arab feudal class, albeit one removed from direct contact (due to their conquering past) with their subject countries. Matters became more complicated when Hishām, who also idealized the Sassānid state structure and administration, initiated economic-political reforms on the pattern of the later Sassānids’ rule. Belyaev notes that increasing fiscal exploitation, harsh punishment and executions of defaulters caused unrest and hostility among the masses who protested vigorously in most of the caliphate provinces. The 25,000-strong Syrian army was defeated in North Africa and in 742 CE uprisings engulfed the entire Maghrib. Similarly, Khawārij movements rose in Afriqīya (Tunisia) and Kairouan, but were ruthlessly suppressed by the caliphal army. Damascus was forced to make new alliances in Syria and Iraq, and Hishām attempted to secure support from the Qaysīs, a policy that offended and antagonised the Kalbīs, and ultimately culminated in factionalism and a loss of confidence in the regimes by the Kalbīs. For Belyaev the reason behind this unrest was

the active discontent of the working masses in all the lands of the Caliphate resulted in the downfall of the Umayyads dynasty for it had lost all social support. The vast resources accumulated by Hishām in the state treasury were dissipated under his politically inept and inactive successors, and his fiscal administration, considered excellent and his well-organised army were soon out of order.¹³⁴

¹³² *ibid.*, 174, 175.

¹³³ *ibid.*, 178.

¹³⁴ Dennett, *Marwān*, 187.

The ruling family's internal conflicts and the feuds of Qaysīs and Kalbīs were significant in the fall of the Umayyads. Despite his military and governing abilities, Marwān b. Muḥammad could not deliver results, having failed to integrate the opposing tribes of Qaysīs and Kalbīs; instead he attached himself completely to the Qaysīs, and consequently had to face great opposition, even in Syria, while the Khawārij revolted against him in Mesopotamia and Iraq. Belyaev argues that the Shiʿī movement took advantage of the general dissatisfaction with the Umayyads and won the favour of the local dihqān (feudal lords) of Khurāsān and Ma-Warāʾ al-Nahr. Abū Muslim Khurāsānī attracted the peasant troops and other factions of the caliphate's deprived working class.¹³⁵

Belyaev explains the difficulties of the mawālīs, including Umayyad aggression even after they had accepted Islam. He analyses the Kalbī-Qaysī conflict, the Khawārij rebellion, and the Hāshimid movement and their contribution to the shifting of the paradigm and collapse of the Umayyads. To Belyaev this social activism was a manifestation of economic unrest, and the struggle of the working class against the ruling elites. Undoubtedly, the application of a Marxist methodology is a novel idea for the study of Muslim history. Despite considerable objections to portraying the Khawārij as a working class,¹³⁶ Belyaev's book still contributes to the historical period chosen for the present study.

2.4.6 Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds: God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam.

In their brief but valuable monograph, Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds attempt to evaluate the well-established image of early Muslim history, according to which, the first three caliphs of the Rāshidūn period successfully maintained the unity of both political and religious leadership, which began to collapse during the reign of ʿAlī and then disintegrated completely during the Umayyad era. They argue that this image is the product of later Muslim historians and scholars, and instead depict the caliphs of the Umayyads and ʿAbbāsids as political leaders who appointed the

¹³⁵ *ibid.*, 188-190.

¹³⁶ It is an over-estimation to consider the Khawārij as working class. The historical sources reveal that they belonged to various social strata within the tribal society.

commanders, governors and bureaucrats, indicating that religious affairs were run separately by the Islamic scholars. The same Islamic scholars condemned the Umayyads as anti-Islamic thus acquired a perceived legitimacy and consolidated their power over Islamic law-giving to the complete exclusion of the Caliph.

God's Caliph explores the concept of khilāfat and attempts its definition. Crucially, the work differentiates between Khalīfat Allah and Khalīfat rasūl Allah. The authors argue that the Khalīfat rasūl Allah inherits his power from the Prophet while the former claims to be the deputy of God. They assembled a wide collection of references ranging from inscriptions on coins to Arabic poetry and literature which proved that the Umayyad and the ʿAbbāsīd caliphates employed the title of Khalīfat Allah and considered themselves as representatives of God in order to implement and observe God's commandments, practice, decree, restrictive statutes, ordinances and rights.¹³⁷ They also provide much evidence that the Umayyad Caliphs not only established their political leadership but also gave their legal verdicts and interpreted the sunna in order to exercise their powers as the deputies of God. They further claim that the conflict between the ulamā' and caliphs over the control of religious matters remained a permanent feature of the Umayyads and ʿAbbāsīds, culminating in the success of the ulamā' after the failure of al-Māmūn's miḥna movement. The caliph was thus deprived of religious legitimacy, and secular monarchy emerged in the Sunnī world. Crone and Hinds' contribution proves especially pertinent to the present research as they establish an Umayyad religious identity that offers understanding of the nature of the Umayyads' rule and their legitimacy in the light of Qurānic texts and prophetic traditions.

2.4.7 G. R. Hawting's The First Dynasty of Islam: the Umayyad Caliphate A.D. 661-750

Wellhausen's methodology in *The Arab Kingdom and its Fall* attracted the attention of many scholars of early Muslim history, although his source analysis method was challenged by Noth, and many of his assumptions had been called into question by the end of the twentieth century (M. A. Shaban's work is a prime example in this regard). G. R. Hawting's work, as his preface admits, is an effort to validate Wellhausen's critique of the Umayyads. Hawting attempts to present a

¹³⁷ Crone, Patricia and Hinds, Martin, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the first centuries of Islam*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 27.

plausible justification for Wellhausen's thesis as well as much original thinking on the topic, while material on the interpretation of primary and modern sources is devoted to examining the methodological complexities of evaluating the Umayyad sources.¹³⁸ He also briefly analyses modern methods formulated for the study of the Umayyads following the introduction of Wellhausen's methodology.

The First Dynasty of Islam is focused more on methodological discourses than on explanations, details and illustrations of the Umayyads. It underlines the importance of the Umayyad period and its place in Islamic history through its presentation of the Umayyads' political and governmental organisation and their functioning through the power of Caliphs and their governors. As a beginner's guide to the topic, Hawting's overview of the social and religious fragmentation is undeniably valid, but his interpretation of the Umayyads' rise and fall is somewhat simplistic. In his opinion, Umayyad rule was based on successful management of tribal alignment, while their fall was due to sectarian conflicts. Nevertheless for the present study his book provides substantial information, particularly regarding the civil war during the time of ʿAbd al-Malik, the policies and strategies of ʿAbd al-Malik and al-Ḥajjāj, and the issue of factionalism and the problems of Islamisation. However there is no evaluation of al-Walīd's rule, which Hawting sees as an extension of ʿAbd al-Malik's policies under the governorship of al-Ḥajjāj. On the decline of the Umayyads, Hawting offers an extensive analysis of the third civil war and the caliphate of Marwān II, and describes the overthrow of the Umayyad caliphate. He views internal conflict in the Umayyad family to be causally linked to their decadence and ultimate fall.

¹³⁸ Hawting notes that the most important source for the reconstruction of their history is the small number of existing texts produced by the Umayyads, such as government accords and documents. Most of these texts are generally regarded as reliable and authentic. Some were produced in non-Arab languages such as Syriac and Armenian. Similarly, archaeological evidence, art and architecture, inscriptions on buildings and coins, and administrative documents on papyrus are the primary sources of the study of the period. Hawting recommends several sources for the study of literature produced by the non-Arabs in Syriac and Armenian. For general information see the "Index of sources" in M. A. Cook and P. Crone's *Hagarism*. On Syriac sources, S. P. Brock's *Syriac sources for the seventh century*; for coins and inscriptions, J. Walker's *A Catalogue of the Arab-Byzantine and post-reform Umayyad Coins*, and *A Catalogue of the Arab-Sasanian coins*; for art and architecture, K. A. C. Cresswell's *Early Muslim Architecture* and O. Grabar's *The formation of Islamic art*; and for an introduction to the literature on papyrology, J. Sauvaget's *Introduction to the history of the Muslim East*. Chapter 16 is particularly relevant for the study of the Umayyads. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, 121, 122.

The third fitna or civil war broke out after the death of Hishām's successor al-Walīd II in 744 and ended with the establishment of Marwān II's authority over the provinces. As governor of the northern frontier region of Mesopotamia, Marwān II had assembled a well-organised army consisting largely of Qaysī soldiers engaged in wars with Byzantines and Khazars. After the death of Yazīd III, Marwān refused to accept Ibrāhīm's rule and attacked Damascus with the help of the Qaysī military, also gathering support from the Qaysites of Qinnasrin and Hims. Ibrāhīm was defeated; however, Marwān had to face the opposition of Sulaymān b. Hishām, who had his own private army of mawālīs (known as the Dhakwānīya after their commander), and was also supported by the Kalbīs of southern Syria. Sulaymān's army was defeated, even though the Kalbīs continued to struggle against the regime with its opposing ʿAbbāsīd forces.¹³⁹ Hawting argues that internal conflict and the fragile government of Marwān II gave the Khawārij and Shiʿī movement an opportunity to expand their influence across the Umayyad caliphate. However, Hawting's view that the Khurāsānian and Khawārij movements played a decisive role in the collapse of the Umayyads era is of course deserving of further investigation.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ *ibid.*, 96-97.

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 105.

2.4.8 ʿAbd al-Ameer ʿAbd Dixon’s *The Umayyads Caliphate 65-86/684-705*

ʿAbd al-Ameer ʿAbd Dixon undertook a political study of the Umayyads focused on the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān (65-86/684-705). A brief description of the socio-political and religious context of ʿAbd al-Malik is followed by descriptions of the conflict and revolt that occurred during his reign, including the ʿAlid opposition, the nature of al-Mukhtār b. ʿUbayd al-Thaqafī’s revolt, ways in which factionalism was suppressed by ʿAbd al-Malik, the conflict between Ibn Zubayr and ʿAbd al-Malik, the revolts of Ibn Jārūd and of the Zang, the role of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn al-Ashʿath in the policies of al-Hajjāj, and the Khārijite revolts.

Dixon, who extols ʿAbd al-Malik’s deep devotion to Islamic learning and the way Jerusalem’s Dome of the Rock was constructed to impress the Syrian subjects with the glory of Islam, regards ʿAbd al-Malik’s foreign policy as profoundly informed by his religious proclivity, since, after successfully maintaining internal peace and security, his devotion would motivate him to wage jihād against the Byzantine infidels. Many accounts are cited to confirm ʿAbd al-Malik’s strong religious adherence, his reverence for Islamic scholars and his efforts to pass on his faith to his children.¹⁴¹

In Dixon’s view, revolt and the internal conflicts of early Islam contributed considerably to the development of the Shīʿīs as a sect, and in turn, significantly influenced the Umayyads’ socio-political landscape: he considers ʿaṣabīya (tribal feuds) one of the most important causes of conflict during the Umayyads era. Many historians link this to the historic antagonism of the Qays and the Kalb (i.e., the Northern and Southern Arabs). Goldziher sees this as the consequence of rivalry between the Quraysh and Anṣār, while Wellhausen argues that the tribal feuds “between the Qays and the Kalb did not exist before the capture of Syria by the Muslims and the immigration thither of the Qays.”¹⁴² However, Dixon concludes that the development of the tribal feuds in the Umayyad period resulted from economic and social factors. His treatment of ʿAbd al-Malik portrays him as a successful administrator who not only suppressed internal conflicts and revolts

¹⁴¹ ʿAbd al-Ameer ʿAbd Dixon, *The Umayyad Caliphate 65-86/684-705 (A Political Study)*, (London: Luzac & Company, 1971), 23-24.

¹⁴² *ibid.*, 83.

but who also “laid a solid foundation for the more spectacular achievements of his son, al-Walīd, in the expansion of the Islamic Empire.”¹⁴³ In terms of its value to the present study, Dixon’s book provides valuable insights regarding the politics of ʿAbd al-Malik and al-Walīd, but does not offer any analysis relating to the fall of the Umayyads.

2.4.9 Hugh Kennedy's *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: the Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century*, (A History of the Near East)

This is the first of a seven-volume History of the Near East, which appeared under the general editorship of P. M. Holt. Providing a political history of the Islamic Near East, it covers the period from the early Islamic era to the Seljuq occupation of Baghdad in 1055. Kennedy presents a comprehensive overview of political development and its socio-economic background, and regards the political events of the period as the product of social and economic forces, explaining that the emergence of political elite groups, based on their conversion to Islam, was due to “the experimental nature of early Islamic politics”¹⁴⁴ He further argues that the Muslims in the Near East were in a tiny minority under the Rāshidūn and Umayyad caliphs and that the Muslim leadership of that period was a highly mobilised elite class, categorised in Islamic terms and responsible for a vast territory. Thus, the caliphate was not a centralized institution, but “almost a confederation of different leaderships acknowledging one overall authority.”¹⁴⁵

The caliphate had not been based on centralized institutions and the caliphs received little financial support from the provinces. From the time of ʿAbd al-Malik in particular, the Umayyads attempted to centralize their institutions in particular, but this was only achieved during the reign of the ʿAbbāsīd caliph al-Muʿtasim, who effectively asserted his authority in all state and particularly fiscal affairs.¹⁴⁶ However, mass conversion to Islam changed the socio-political scenario, since all institutions, from the military to the bureaucracy and the judiciary courts, expanded enormously, while regional leaders manoeuvred for greater autonomy. Kennedy argues that the real trouble was economic, i.e., “the long term decline in the prosperity of the Sawād”. With the wars of conquest

¹⁴³ *ibid.*, 198.

¹⁴⁴ Kennedy, *The Prophet*, 50.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 33, 74, 83.

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 102, 111, 134, 161.

ending, and revenues lost from the provinces because of internal provincial autonomy and other factors, the central government faced serious economic problems. By then it had lost its resources, and the result was an economic collapse that left the Islamic world with what Kennedy calls a dangerously “hollow centre”.¹⁴⁷

Kennedy argues that the death of al-Walid II was the immediate cause of the demise of Umayyad rule since the tribal feuds among the Qaysites and Yemenites, suppressed during the reign of Hishām, re-emerged and resulted in its destruction.¹⁴⁸ Kennedy confirms the controversial personality of Yazīd III (who has been described either as a virtuous reformer or a barefaced opportunist), and considers tribal factionalism as one of the most important factors in the demise of the Umayyads. His discussion of the third civil war is framed in terms of tribal animosities, with the Qays-Yemen conflict featuring prominently (Marwān suppressed the Yemenites with the help of his Qaysite alliance),¹⁴⁹ while also arguing that a lack of religious authority led to the Umayyad dynasty’s decline.¹⁵⁰ In addition, he sees sound and rigorous education as having played a central role in the rise and success of Thaqafis under the Umayyads.¹⁵¹

Kennedy successfully illustrates “a basic framework of chronological narrative” of the caliphate in the history of the Near East and appears eager to devote space to long-term social and economic changes and to the positive aspects of Muslim government and the immense achievement of the period.¹⁵² For Kennedy, the Qays-Yemen conflict, economic deficit and the deficit in religious authority during the late Umayyad period were the most significant elements in the final disintegration of the Umayyad caliphate.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 189-190.

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*, 105.

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 114-115.

¹⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 116-117.

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*, 86.

¹⁵² *ibid.*, Preface.

2.4.10 Khalid Yahya Blankinship's *The End of the Jihād State: The Reign of Hishām Ibn ʿAbd al-Malik and the Collapse of the Umayyads*.

Modern scholarship has evaluated the event of the fall of the Umayyad state with a variety of paradigm-setting studies. Mostly it has analysed the caliphate's internal problems: rebellions, dynastic squabbles, social and economic change, the mawālī movement, and conflict within the royal family over the right of succession and legitimacy to rule the state. Interestingly Blankinship considers the external problems that remained unsettled and ultimately led the state to collapse, arguing that the early Islamic polity was a jihād state and that military expansion was necessary even for the existence of the caliphate, because holy war against the unbelievers conferred legitimacy to the rule.

The reign of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 105-25/724-43) has been seen as one of the most significant periods of Umayyad history in terms both of the flourishing and successes of the Umayyad caliphate, and of Hishām's personality. However, Blankinship argues that Hishām was responsible for the demise of the caliphate because of his expansionist policies, claiming that Hishām's aggressive policy of jihād brought the state to a dangerous end. Hishām's expansionist policy continued throughout his regime on almost all frontiers, whereas the state was in no position to meet either the military expenditures or economic needs. Elite Syrian troops were deployed throughout the frontiers of the caliphate, and because of this policy, a power vacuum emerged in Syria, leading to the events of the third civil war and the fall of the Umayyad dynasty. Cobb commends Blankinship for his meticulous approach to the military records which, though prominent in the sources, had not been viewed as a popular or fashionable research topic before the 1970s, and even calls their contents "dull reports of obscure events" to emphasise his appreciation for Blankinship's scholarly efforts and imaginative use of available data to uncover possible reasons for Umayyad decline.¹⁵³

Blankinship identifies four expansionist waves and four interruptions in early Islamic history: first, the Medina State and the First Expansion during 2-35/623-56, which was interrupted during the First Civil War 35-40/5/6-61; second, The Sufyānid Umayyad State and the Second Expansion

¹⁵³ Cobb, Paul M., *The End of the Jihād State*, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, vol. 56, No. 1 (Jan, 1997), 56.

during 40-63/661-83, which was interrupted by the Second Civil War 63-76/683-93; third, the Marwānīd Umayyad State and the Third Expansion during 73-99/692-718, which was interrupted by the reign of ʿUmar II (r. 99-101/718-20); fourth, the Expansion made during 101-22/720-40 which ended with the start of the Third Civil war, culminating in the demise of the Umayyads caliphate. The expansionist war policy remained in focus during the reigns of Yazīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik and Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik on the Byzantine front and in the Caucasus, Transoxiana, Sijistan, India, the eastern desert in Egypt, North Africa, Spain and France. The war policy failed heavily in 112-14/730-2, when Umayyad forces were defeated on almost all frontiers. Hishām failed to cope with the emerging situation and continued the traditional strategy of ‘perpetual advance until victory’.¹⁵⁴

Although the Umayyads military had achieved some success by 122/740, even then the Umayyads caliphate was, according to Blankinship’s depiction, “a hollow shell, ruined by the expense its military excesses claimed in lives and wealth”.¹⁵⁵ Blankinship argues that many unproductive and unsuccessful campaigns were initiated, causing enormous fiscal burdens on the state. In order to fund the military’s war requirements, new taxes had to be imposed, which in turn agitated the masses. The continuous war weakened the Syrian army which was already posted in places far from its strategic centre. This situation gave opportunities to other elements, particularly Muḍarī tribal forces of the Jazīra who had been deprived of power about sixty years earlier in the battle of Marj Rāhit in 684 AD.

Blankinship also examines the mawālī movement and inter-Arab factionalism, a phenomenon he does not consider novel. However, the failure of jihādī expansionist policies on the external front had given rise to internal regime problems,¹⁵⁶ and Blankinship claims that although Hishām’s successors attempted to reform the jihād policy by introducing numerous programmes intended to overcome the losses, all was in vain and the caliphate could not be saved. Blankinship’s study is based on a variety of Muslim and non-Islamic literary traditions. Having collected and synthesised a great deal of information from divergent sources, he draws conclusions regarding the demise of

¹⁵⁴ Blankinship, *The End of the Jihād State*, 146.

¹⁵⁵ *ibid.*, 168.

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*, 97-102.

the Umayyad caliphate through painstaking analysis and reinterpretation of Hishām's military policy a subject sometimes perceived as less immediately exciting.

2.4.11 Steven Clark Judd's *The Third Fitna: Orthodoxy, Heresy and Coercion in Late Umayyad History*

The Umayyad regime was shaken by the third fitna or civil war (126/744-130/747). In his doctoral dissertation Steven Judd analyses the third civil war, its root causes and impact, and the role of religious factors in the demise of the Umayyad caliphate. Regarding the third fitna period as relevant to the study of religious factors and their role in the decline of the Umayyad regime, Judd examines, in particular, the political endeavours of religious scholars and sectarian groups, and the involvement of political figures in religious debates, in order to determine "whether religious disagreements created conflicts between political actors or whether more cynically, religion merely provided an ideological crutch in pure power politics."¹⁵⁷ Hishām was a successful ruler, having suppressed Khārijī and ʿAlid movements while maintaining a balance among competing tribal and religious and political groups. With the ending of his long and stable reign, religious movements re-emerged as a contributing factor to declining rule. In Judd's view, "the regime's religious foundation was destructed as well, raising questions about the nature of the caliphate and its relationship to the development of Islam." He hopes his research will provide "a better understanding of the political and religious forces mobilised during the third fitna [and] will lead to a clearer explanation of the successful balancing of forces achieved by Hishām in the preceding years."¹⁵⁸

Regarding modern scholarship on the subject, Judd thinks that conflicts in early Islamic history were both political and religious, and that early Islamic social and political movements had important doctrinal aspects.¹⁵⁹ He asserts that both the political elites and religious figures were highly concerned with the issue of the emergence of heresy, since allegations of heresy were widespread during the heated polemics of the late Umayyad period and the period preceding the

¹⁵⁷ Steven Clark Judd, "The Third Fitna: Orthodoxy, Heresy and Coercion in Late Umayyad History", unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA, (1997), 3.

¹⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 4.

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*, 27.

ʿAbbāsīd revolution, with pejorative labels and religious doctrine being employed to propagate particular ideological ideas.¹⁶⁰ Judd cites many cases where ʿAbd al-Malik, ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz and Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik interrogated numbers of suspected heretics.¹⁶¹ Having examined the heresiographical literature (such as al-Ashʿarī's *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyūn*), he argues that the debate over heresy was highly advanced by that time,¹⁶² and claims that the persecutions during the Umayyad period had not been carried out haphazardly: rather, the treatment of heretics was well-defined and consistent.¹⁶³ Any assumption that the Umayyad caliphs did not participate in religious disputes on the issue of orthodoxy and heresy would be unrealistic. In fact, Judd maintains that the debate over heresy was political. Doctrinal disputes were very much politicised in the early Islamic history; although the Umayyads primarily sought secular goals, they attempted to attain the authority to define orthodoxy and doctrine for the community.¹⁶⁴ Judd highlights this in the context of the third fitna, when the Umayyad regime sought to extend its control over religious affairs.

On the other hand, the opponents of the regime seemed anxious to ascertain the foundation of their legitimacy. The doctrinal stance of the ʿAlid on the conception of imāmah and the Khārījī call for reliance on a shūrā were presented to justify their religious right to authority. From this perspective, it was logical for the late Umayyads to acquire religious legitimisation and to challenge religious opponents to establish their authority over doctrinal and religious affairs. This period, as Judd comments, “was not riddled with sectarian schisms and religious disputes because of the regime’s decline, but rather because the regime increased its efforts to consolidate its religious authority and met resistance from dissenters whom the Umayyads had previously tolerated or ignored.”¹⁶⁵

Judd evaluates the late Umayyad period and third fitna with reference to the role of religious groups and how they contributed to the construction of socio-political events of the period. He gives particular attention to the increasing prominence of heresy in the late Umayyad period and

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*, 28.

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*, 32.

¹⁶² *ibid.*, 29.

¹⁶³ *ibid.*, 32.

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.*, 40.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*, 43.

Hishām's discursive behaviour towards heresy and orthodoxy. Hishām, who had previously been more pluralist and tolerant of diversity, became more rigid and attempted to impose state orthodoxy. Of notable significance in Judd's work is its study of the role of the state as a religious actor, which enables us to understand the historical complexities of the third fitna and the role of religious factors in eventual Umayyad decline.

2.5 Selected Research Articles

2.5.1 Athamina's *"Taxation Reforms in Early Islamic Khurāsān: A Reassessment"*

Athamina attempts to reassess taxation reform during the early Islamic period until the end of the Umayyad rule. He also analyses taxation reforms and their role in the process of Islamisation and the mawālī movements. According to his assessment, conversion to Islam was modest until the end of the first century AH, when a delegation from Khurāsān came to ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Azīz complaining that about twenty thousand Muslims still paid the jizya (poll tax).¹⁶⁶ Athamina, who concludes on the basis of this report that so far, conversion to Islam was not guaranteed to exempt the new convert from paying the poll tax,¹⁶⁷ and views the state as lacking any well-defined policy regarding the preaching and spreading of Islam. This situation remained unchanged until the arrival of Ashras al-Sulamī in Khurāsān, who sent his officials from Marv to the Sughdian people in Transoxania to preach Islam with a promise to exempt those who embraced Islam from paying jizya. Athamina describes Ashras "as acting under the pressure of political circumstances which prevailed in the area."¹⁶⁸ Ashras also asked Abū Ṣaydāʾ, a well-known mawālī and God-fearing Muslim, to preach Islam. The latter accepted this task on condition that all those who embraced Islam would be exempt from the jizya.

Dennett has argued that taxation reforms in Khurāsān were carried out before Ashras became governor of the province and the status of land was changed from ʿahd (lands given up to the

¹⁶⁶ Athamina states that ʿUmar II ordered his deputy to remove injustice. However, the situation remained unchanged, as his orders were not respected in Khurāsān, and the new Muslims continued to pay *jizya*. It is reported that ʿUmar II suspended al-Jarrāḥ al-Ḥakamī from office on a charge of disobedience. For details see Khalil Athamina, "Taxation Reforms in Early Islamic Khurāsān: A Reassessment", *Islam*, No. 56, 1988, 272-281, at 272.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*, 272.

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.*, 273.

Muslims under a peace treaty)¹⁶⁹ to *kharāj* (lands surrendered to the Muslims under force).¹⁷⁰ According to this reasoning, if the native subjects embraced Islam, they would be free from paying *jizya*. Abū al-Ṣaydā's demand that Ashras should apply the same measures in Transoxania as applied in Khurāsān appears logical in this context.¹⁷¹ Athamina reveals a report, on the authority of al-Balādhurī, that Ashras invited the people of Transoxania to Islam and ordered that all who accepted Islām should be exempt from paying the poll-tax, whereupon a great number of people embraced Islam.¹⁷² Athamina believes that Ashras understood perfectly well that with the exemption policy, there would be a reduction in the total sum of tribute, and therefore increased the amount of the tribute in order to balance the treasury's total income.¹⁷³ He concludes from this that the ruler had the authority to increase or reduce the tribute (*al-waḏifa*) according to necessity, a type of agreement also practised in Egypt. Athamina gives a detailed elaboration of Ashras' taxation reforms and the ways in which these reforms affected the lives of the people of Khurāsān and Transoxania. He also evaluates the taxation reforms of Naṣr b. Sayyār, the last governor of Khurāsān during the reign of the Umayyad caliphate, and acknowledges the differing opinions in modern scholarship regarding Naṣr's reforms.

Wellhausen had argued that Naṣr reformed the whole system of tax, which Dennett contradicts, suggesting that he was no more than an organiser, essentially employed to eliminate misconduct and injustice and develop an accurate tax system. Naṣr exempted converts from paying the *jizya* in order to give relief to people and abolish this humiliating symbol. Athamina argues that Naṣr not only reformed Khurāsān's taxation system but also ordered the re-writing of all Khurāsān's official records in Arabic, to ensure his reforms were implemented.¹⁷⁴ In all probability, such reforms were too late to win the hearts and minds of ahl-Khurāsān.

¹⁶⁹ Lands which yielded to the Muslims under the peace treaty.

¹⁷⁰ Lands which yielded to the Muslims by force.

¹⁷¹ Dennett, *Conversion and the Poll Tax*, 122; Athamina, *Taxation Reforms*, 274.

¹⁷² Athamina, *Taxation Reforms*, 276; Al-Balādhurī, Aḥmad b. Yahya, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, (ed. S. al-Munajjid), (Cairo, 1956-1957), 526/3.

¹⁷³ Athamina, *Taxation Reforms*, 276.

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.*, 280-281.

2.5.2 Saleh Said Agha's *"The Arab Population in Ḥurāsān during the Umayyads Period: Some Demographic Computations"*

Agha attempts to evaluate the size of the segment of Khurāsān's ethnic Arab population. There is a serious difference of opinion in modern scholarship regarding this issue, divided, according to Agha into two schools. The classical school of thought views the role of the ethnic Arabs in Khurāsān as minimal, compared to that played by the ethnic Iranian population and believe in the predominantly Iranian identity of the Revolution. Agha considers the best representatives of the classical school of thought to be J. Wellhausen,¹⁷⁵ and G. van Vloten.¹⁷⁶ Scholars of the second, or 'revisionist', school of thought consider the predominantly Arab identity of the ʿAbbāsīd revolution, and include Dennett,¹⁷⁷ Farouk Omer,¹⁷⁸ Shabān,¹⁷⁹ and Moshe Sharon.¹⁸⁰

Agha appears allied to the revisionist school of thought, arguing that the ʿAbbāsīd revolution had deep roots in the masses of Khurasān where it was incubated, "nurtured and conducted on the grass-roots level."¹⁸¹ Khurāsān provided the base for a decisive encounter with the regime. Agha stresses three key meanings for the term 'ahl Khurāsān', denoting respectively the indigenous people of Khurāsān (Khurāsān province-at-large including Transoxania); the Arab population in the province (both military and civilian); and both sections of Khurāsānian society. Agha attempts to conduct a demographic computation of the Arab population of Khurāsān by applying quantitative research methods to ascertain the ratio. The main sources of his numerical data are those of Arabic history, particularly al-Balādhurī and the anonymous Akhbār al-Dawla al-

¹⁷⁵ Wellhausen, *Arab Kingdom and its Fall*,

¹⁷⁶ G van Vloten, *Al-Siyāda al-ʿArabiyya wa al-Shiʿa wa al-Isrāʾīliyyat fī ʿAhd Banī Umayya*, tr. Ḥ.I. Ḥasan and M Ibrāhīm, (Cairo, 1934).

¹⁷⁷ Daniel Dennett, *Marwān ibn Muḥammad-Passing of the Umayyad Caliphate*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Harvard University, (1939).

¹⁷⁸ Farouk Omar, *The Abbāsīd Caliphate 132/750-170/786*, (Baghdad: The National Printing and Publishing Co., 1969).

¹⁷⁹ M. A. Shabān, *The Abbāsīd Revolution*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

¹⁸⁰ Moshe Sharon, *Black Banners from the East* (Max Schloessinger Memorial Monograph II), Jerusalem and Leiden: The Hebrew University-E.J.Brill, 1983; and Idem, *Revolt, the Social and Military Aspects of the ʿAbbāsīd Revolution* (Max Schloessinger Memorial Monograph V), (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1990).

¹⁸¹ Saleh Said Agha, "The Arab Population in Ḥurāsān during the Umayyads Period: Some Demographic Computations" in *Arabica*, T. 46, Fasc. 2 (1999), 211-229 at 211, 212.

‘Abbāsīya.¹⁸² Similarly he consults dīwān literature to collect numerical information on army personnel and the number of their dependents.

With the help of principles of modern demography, Agha interpreted the ancient figures, and with reference to Ṭabarī, asserts that “a total dīwān enrolment was of 54,000 (7,000 of whom were mawālī). Of the 47,000 were from the Aḥmās of Basra, and 7,000 from the mostly Yamanite tribes of Kufa.”¹⁸³ He maintains that “on the basis of above figures and a ratio of 4 family members to each warrior”, Wellhausen computed that “the total number of the Arabs in Ḥurāsān can hardly have amounted to more than 200,000.” Similarly, Sharon asserts, “with great reservations, that the total Arab population in Ḥurāsān at the zenith of the Umayyads period could not have exceeded a quarter of a million.”¹⁸⁴ Through a contrastive study of modern and ancient sources, Agha concludes that by and large the Arab population in Khurāsān during the last eight decades of the Umayyad rule could not have been less than 115,000, nor could it have exceeded 175,000.¹⁸⁵ His article is innovative, providing new dimensions through which to understand more objectively the elements that contributed to the fall of the Umayyads.

2.5.3 Patricia Crone’s “*Were The Qays and Yemen of the Umayyad Period Political Parties?*”

Patricia Crone, one of the most celebrated writers in the field, wrote extensively on the Umayyads. This article is a critique of Shaban’s thesis on the tribal rivalries and confrontations of Qays and Yemen.¹⁸⁶ She dismisses his theory as obsolete and faulty and terms her own work an endeavour

¹⁸² *ibid.*, 214.

¹⁸³ *ibid.*, 217.

¹⁸⁴ *ibid.*, 65-66.

¹⁸⁵ With the application of a dependency ratio formula of 1:4, Agha proves that “the entire Arab population in the province was of a ‘computable’ size insufficient to enable them to play a role sufficiently adequate to confer on ‘*ahl-Ḥurāsān*’, in the context of the Revolution, an ethnic Arab identity – not even if the Arabs of the province were disposed to revolt.” *ibid.*, 213, 214.

¹⁸⁶ In this regard, Crone cites David Powers: “Although scholars disagree over whether the terms ‘Qays’ and ‘Yaman’ refer to tribal confederations, political parties, or interest groups it is generally accepted that the Qays stood for the expansion of the empire and the exclusion of non-Arab clients, while the Yaman criticized the policy of expansion and advocated equal status for Muslims and non-Arab converts to Islam.” Powers, D.S., (tr.) *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, Vol.24 (Albany 1989), p. xiv; Crone, Patricia, ‘Were The Qays and Yemen of the Umayyad Period Political Parties?’ *Islam*, 71, (1994), 1-57 at 1.

to refute his thesis once and for all,¹⁸⁷ arguing that Shaban attempted to address the relationship between two apparently hostile tribal groups engaged in ʿaṣabīya or “partisan behaviour” during the Umayyad period.¹⁸⁸ She also gives a detailed historical elaboration of the terms ‘Qays’ and ‘Yaman’, according to which genealogists divide the Arabs into sons of Ismāʿīl, and sons of Qaḥṭān, who are northern and southern respectively.¹⁸⁹

Crone acknowledges such a thesis to have been dismissed by Wellhausen, who indicated that there was no evidence of conflict between the northern and southern tribes before the Second Civil War and the battle of Marj Rāhiṭ (684 AD).¹⁹⁰ She criticises Shaban’s lack of any historical evidence for the tribal rivalries between Qays/Muḍar and Yaman throughout the Umayyad period, and judges Shaban to have resolved the problem regarding the tribal labels of Qays/Muḍar and Yaman by declaring them political parties in the Marwānid period (684-750 A.D.). She argues that, according to the Shaban thesis, those committed to military expansion on the one hand and the segregation of Arab and non-Arab on the other were those who pledged their allegiance to Qays. Meanwhile, those against the expansionist approach and desiring assimilation of non-Arab converts to Islam in Muslim society while also calling for equal rights, belonged to the Yamanī group. Al-Ḥajjāj was the leading representative of Qays during the reigns of ʿAbd al-Malik and al-Walīd. According to Shaban, the majority of the Umayyad caliphs, with the exception of Sulaymān and ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, opted for Qaysī governors: as Crone elaborates:

There was also a Yamanī interlude under Hishām. Eventually the conflict engendered civil war, for the Yamanis staged a coup against al-Walīd II in 744 and raised Yazīd III to the throne; and though they were defeated by Marwān II, the last exponent of Qaysism, they won again at the

¹⁸⁷ Crone, ‘Were The Qays and Yemen’, 1.

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*, 2.

¹⁸⁹ The southerners are called (*ahl*) *al-Yaman* or *al-Yamanīya*, and also Kalb; while the northerners are the descendants of ʿAdnān, known as Nizār (descendants of ʿAdnān), Nizārīya; as Muḍar (son of Nizār) or Muḍarīya; or as Qays (a descendent of Muḍar) or Qaysīya. However, Rabiʿa, a tribe of eastern Arabia, “is a special case in that their allegiances went now to the northern and now to the southerners.” *ibid.*, 2

¹⁹⁰ *ibid.*, 3.

hands of the ʿAbbāsids, whose revolution brought about the complete assimilation of Arab and non-Arab in Islam.’¹⁹¹

Perhaps Crone damns Shaban with faint praise when highlighting the value of his analysis for undergraduate students. She argues that in Shaban’s view, the Qaysīs supported imperialism and racist policies while the Yamanīs vowed to adhere to liberal ideas and equality. However, having collected data on all of the governors during the Umayyad caliphate and demonstrated that no antagonism was observed during the entire period of the caliphate, with the exception of the time of the third fitna or civil war (when Yazīd III’s power was exclusively based on Yamanīyah and while Marwān was completely dependent on the Qaysī forces), the reality was contrary to that previously theorised.¹⁹² Crone also decries Shaban’s portrayal of Sulaymān as non-expansionist, asserting that Sulaymān’s foreign and expansionist policies were a continuation of previous policies. Yazīd b. Muhallab pursued an expansionist policy in Khurāsān and Ḥajjāj but policies of conquering western India remained unchanged.¹⁹³ In analysing the events of the third civil war and the allegiances of Yamanīya to Yazīd III and Qaysīyah to Marwān II respectively, Crone also emphasises that Yazīd II’s reform policy was “more likely to reflect Yazīd III’s Qadarite convictions than his Yemenī associations and this is the one and only occasion on which a convergence between Qadarism and Yemenism is attested.”¹⁹⁴ Crone’s criticism provides a new dimension towards addressing the issue more holistically, though there are still many ambiguities to be resolved in order to assess the relationship between Yamanīs with Yazīd III and the Hāshimid revolution.

We have seen that modern scholarship has applied a variety of methods and different techniques to evaluate the Umayyad period. However, little has still been done to study the aims and objectives of Muslim historiographers in their writings on Umayyad rule. The present study aims to fill this gap systematically, and the limitations, research methodology, and plan of research have been set

¹⁹¹ *ibid.*, 4.

¹⁹² *ibid.*, 5, 7-11, 12, 17, 18.

¹⁹³ *ibid.*, 19.

¹⁹⁴ *ibid.*, 42.

out accordingly (Chapter One). In order properly to understand and evaluate the phenomenon of the fall of the Umayyads, Chapter Three presents a historical perspective on Umayyad rule.

3 Chapter Three: The Umayyads - a Historical Background

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the foundational issues and general background of Umayyad rule. It concentrates on (a) the formation of the Umayyad caliphate through an historical analysis of its initiation and establishment; (b) the way in which power transferred to Syria, and how the Sufyānid branch of the Umayyads assumed control of Muslim rule; (c) how authority shifted from the Sufyānid branch to the Marwānid branch of the Umayyads; (d) the impact of the Umayyads on Muslim socio-political spheres, the various dynamics of Muslim society at a crucial time in the shaping of its future political structure, and how opposition to the Umayyads emerged during the Umayyad era; and (e) how Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony contributes to explanations of the formation and development of the Umayyad period.

3.2 Formation of the Umayyad Caliphate

The Umayyad caliphate marked a shift from traditional Arab authority patterns to a cosmopolitan Byzantine-oriented Syrian system. Islam's first audiences were Arabs living in a tribal society.¹⁹⁵ Consequently, when Muḥammad died there was no agreed political process by which his successor could be elected or selected to fill the vacuum. To select a successor able to perform both religious and political obligations was a huge task.¹⁹⁶ The period from Abū Bakr's succession to the assassination of ʿAlī, is known as the 'pious caliphate' (khilāḥat rāshidah). During this time, four persons were recognised as caliphs through a variety of methods but without any particular criteria or systematic process for selection or nomination being adopted. This resulted

¹⁹⁵ Islam does have rules and regulations for its socio-political values. According to Islamic teachings, it is an obligation upon Muslims and the responsibility of the Muslim community to devise their own socio-political system, incorporating Islamic rules and regulations to fulfil the demands and requirements of their own time and space.

¹⁹⁶ After the death of the Prophet Muḥammad, Abū Bakr was acclaimed by ʿUmar, after which the Muslim community took the oath of allegiance to Abū Bakr. The latter, on his deathbed, nominated ʿUmar, who formed a committee of six elites to select one among themselves; they chose ʿUthmān who, after a long rule of about 12 years, was killed following a conspiracy. He had not proposed anyone for his succession. Most of the Muslim community recognised ʿAlī, but Muʿāwiya, the governor of Syria, defied his authority. After ʿAlī's assassination, his son Ḥasan became caliph. He remained in power for about six months before withdrawing from office in favour of Muʿāwiya who was then recognised as universal caliph across the Muslim caliphate. al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, 1/2.

in conflict over issues of succession, and the selection of a caliph became increasingly difficult as Muslims extended their rule beyond the boundaries of Hijāz and the Arabian Peninsula. Socio-political development during this period formed a distinctive culture as a racially-diverse society emerged, characterised by interaction between Arabs of various genealogies, but also between Arabs and non-Arabs. Cultural conflict and cultural assimilation thus emerged concurrently, with the Arabs adopting and reformulating many non-Arab traits.

The thesis aims to understand the formation of the Umayyad period while pertinent historical events were unfolding. Pre-Islamic political authority had collapsed with the triumph of Islam, which in turn meant that the Umayyad dynasty could not continue their traditional political role in Arabia. However, they regained their traditional authority when ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, of Umayyad descent, was elected to power in 23/645.¹⁹⁷ ʿUthmān had not nominated a successor, so that after his death, a civil war, the first fitna, erupted between ʿAlī and the Umayyad family. Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān contested power on the grounds of blood revenge and was eventually successful.¹⁹⁸ Muʿāwiya's lengthy rule actually saw the restoration of the traditional authority of the Umayyads, whose tribal eminence, their pre-Islamic relations with the Syrians, and their capacity to make agreements with conflicting tribal forces, helped them to consolidate their authority. Generally Muʿāwiya is not portrayed as the founder of the Umayyads; he may perhaps be viewed more usefully as the founder because he established political authority in the Umayyad family, and nominated his son as his successor.¹⁹⁹ Altogether, the dynasty comprised thirteen caliphs, and spanned three civil wars, details of which are found throughout this chapter.

¹⁹⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 584/2.

¹⁹⁸ *ibid.*, 167/3.

¹⁹⁹ Al-Ṭabarī reported that he was selected by the *Shura* (Council of the Elders), (al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 260-269/3) and al-Masʿūdī also considered Muʿāwiya as *Khalīfa*. Al-Masʿūdī employed the word *khalīfah* for the era of ʿUthmān and Muʿāwiya while using the word *ayyām* (days) for other Umayyad rulers, meaning that he considered the authority of ʿUthmān and Muʿāwiya to be legitimate but not the others (al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, 181, 445-447).

3.3 The Sufyānid Caliphate of the Umayyads

Muʿāwiya, the founder of the Umayyad caliphate, successfully presented an acceptable alternative to traditional Arab mores in order to address the socio-political issues of a cosmopolitan society. His administrative and political organisation represented a milestone for the Umayyad caliphate. Receiving his early training in the best tradition of the Quraysh, he had accepted Islam at the time of the conquest of Mecca and joined Muḥammad as one of his secretaries. In the year 13/635, during the reign of the first caliph, Abū Bakr, he was sent to Syria as second-in-command to his elder brother Yazīd b. Abī Sufyān in various expeditions against the Byzantines.²⁰⁰ The Sufyānid family had pre-Islamic trade links in Syria where they also owned property, and after the death of his elder brother Yazīd in the plague of ʿAmawās in the year 18/640, Muʿāwiya became head of the Sufyānid family.²⁰¹ He was appointed by the second caliph, ʿUmar, as governor of Syria in Yazīd's place,²⁰² serving for twenty years, uninterrupted, as governor,²⁰³ which enabled him to extend his relationships and establish a strong power base.

He successfully utilised these connections during the conflict with ʿAlī after ʿUthmān's assassination. Muslim sources, even those generally hostile to Muʿāwiya, eulogised him for his quality of ḥilm, or shrewdness and moderation. He exercised his will in order to act according to the demands of time and space; for example, ʿAlī had been wary of Muʿāwiya during the first fitna when ʿUthmān was murdered without having nominated any successor. Prominent members of the Umayyad family, including Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ, al-Walīd b. ʿUqba, ʿAbd Allah b. ʿĀmir b. Kurayz, Yaʿlā b. Umayya, and Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, gathered around ʿĀʾisha to revolt against ʿAlī, and Ṭalḥa and Zubayr also joined ʿĀʾisha in the Battle of the Camel.²⁰⁴ In this battle, fought outside Basra, Ṭalḥa and Zubayr were both killed.²⁰⁵ Muʿāwiya's behaviour throughout this episode is particularly noteworthy. Carefully observing all the events, he waited for a suitable opportunity to gain a strategic position against ʿAlī, and avoided being involved until he was sure that he could

²⁰⁰ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 341/2.

²⁰¹ *ibid.*, 509/2.

²⁰² *ibid.*, 511, 618/2, 265/3.

²⁰³ *ibid.*, 166/3.

²⁰⁴ *ibid.*, 11-59/3.

²⁰⁵ *ibid.*, 55/3.

play a decisive role in the conflict. After ʿĀʾisha’s defeat and the death of the leading opposition leaders Ṭalḥa and Zubayr, all the important members of the Umayyad family including ʿUtba b. Abī Sufyān, two sons of al-Ḥakam, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and Yaḥya, ʿAbd Allah b. ʿĀmir, and ʿAbd Allah b. Saʿd b. Abī Sarḥ took refuge with Muʿāwiya in Damascus.²⁰⁶ Muʿāwiya was an extremely powerful man who could deliver and protect the interests of those opposed to ʿAlī. The perpetual conflict between ʿAlī’s Iraqī Army and Muʿāwiya’s Syrian Army was a significant feature of that period.

Muʿāwiya was tireless in his efforts to establish a strong Syrian military force, and spent enormous amounts of money to ensure the efficiency and loyalty of the Syrian troops. The Syrian army was usually deployed on the Byzantine frontiers to keep watch and to attack if necessary. He also developed garrison towns along the Byzantine coast, and during ʿUthmān’s rule instituted Arab maritime warfare in the Mediterranean to deter the Byzantines.²⁰⁷ Muʿāwiya attempted to establish and organise an army for each province recruited from the people of that province,²⁰⁸ while the Syrian army was there as a reserve force, albeit unused after Ḥasan had revoked his right to the caliphate. From a Gramscian perspective the Syrian Army may credibly represent the Umayyads’ vanguard party. On a provincial level, Ḥasan’s withdrawal might also be seen as the defeat of the Iraqī army, which had surrendered in front of the rival Syrian army.

Muʿāwiya adopted the characteristics of a king, declaring that he was the first of the kings.²⁰⁹ Without sacrificing Syrian pre-eminence, he consolidated his authority by presenting an alternative model system for government and administration. Kennedy argues that in order to consolidate his political power, Muʿāwiya tried to institute a politically and administratively decentralised government in which all provinces could enjoy maximum liberty. He did not introduce a uniform administrative system for all provinces; instead each province was administered according to its

²⁰⁶ *ibid.*, 67-70/3.

²⁰⁷ *ibid.*, 619/2.

²⁰⁸ Kennedy notes: “From his provincial governors the caliph demanded that they accept his authority, that they keep order and that, in some cases, they forward revenues to the central government; it is recorded, for example, that of 60 million *dirhams* collected in the province of Baṣra, only four million were sent to Damascus, all the rest being spent in the province, mostly on paying the local military” (Kennedy, *The Prophet*, 83).

²⁰⁹ Dennett, Marwān ibn Muḥammad, 163.

local traditions,²¹⁰ a policy of moderation that brought various conflicting sections of the community under his leadership. He successfully achieved widespread support from all the provinces although his centre of power was Syria, where he established a strong military base for his expeditions to the Byzantine borders.

Mu^ʿāwīya also integrated the various tribes of Syrian society into his cabinet. Amongst these were the Qays and Yemen tribes, two major tribes of Syrian society who extended their loyalty and allegiance to Mu^ʿāwīya. His cabinet included, in addition, several powerful figures from Quraysh and Qays including ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Khālīd b. al-Walīd who was influential in Homs, and Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qays from the Fihris tribe who was very powerful in al-Jazīra. Among the many Yemenī leaders included in this cabinet were Shuraḥbīl b. al-Simṭ al-Kindī from Homs, and Ḥassān b. Mālīk b. Baḥdal, chief of the Kalb tribe.

Kennedy notes that Mu^ʿāwīya established his authority by devising a policy of reconciliation with powerful political leaders from various provinces. He did not have absolute central authority, but in modern terms, he set up a confederation in which the provincial socio-political forces acknowledged his authority.²¹¹ In addition, Kennedy points out that Mu^ʿāwīya appointed a group of his loyal adherents in important political and military positions. The members of this inner circle were not appointed beyond the borders of Syria and al-Jazīra, and the Syrian army was consistently deployed on the Byzantine borders and Mediterranean islands.²¹² He also implemented a decisive change in the traditional power structure by shifting authority from Hijaz and Iraq to Syria. His government was established through force and power, but the consent of civil society was acquired through strategic alliance and agreement with important socio-political parties.

As Gramsci indicates, the state is not a monolithic entity but is comprised of two interdependent components, i.e., political society and civil society.²¹³ According to this model, hegemony is

²¹⁰ Kennedy, *The Prophet*, 87, 88.

²¹¹ *ibid.*, 83.

²¹² *ibid.*, 86, 87.

²¹³ Antonio Gramsci, "Prison Notebooks, the Intellectuals", in *An Anthology of Western Marxism; From Lukacs and Gramsci to Socialist-Feminism*, ed. Roger S. Gottlieb (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 263.

maintained by dictatorship.²¹⁴ Civil society, composed of private institutions, organisations and individual intellectuals, presents and manufactures ideas through which the hegemon can acquire the consent of the ruled class. Political society, consisting essentially of the police and military, uses force when necessary to establish order. Civil and political societies are however inextricably linked due to their shared interests and common beliefs. Gramsci argues that the hegemon can only establish rule over the masses after successfully winning society's consent.²¹⁵ Mu'āwiya's success in making agreements with both political and civil society is therefore pertinent in this context. In Gramscian terms, Mu'āwiya came into power aided by Syrians who worked for him as a vanguard party. Establishing a decentralised administrative structure and providing for maximum provincial autonomy were the aspects of his strategy that made him acceptable to the masses, while his ability to formulate successful agreements with his opponents was also effective when consolidating authority. A Gramscian interpretation would identify such a strategy as an appropriate response to the prevailing crisis.

Mu'āwiya consolidated his authority by introducing suitable reforms through which he acquired mass consent. He also used coercive power to eliminate rebellious elements. However, the latter years of his reign were more problematic, particularly in relation to his attempts to devise a mechanism for succession. Incorporating a system akin to the traditional hereditary system of succession, he nominated his son Yazīd as successor.²¹⁶ To ensure a smooth transition, he wanted ashraf and the elite of the Muslim community to acknowledge Yazīd as his heir during his lifetime. The Syrians agreed unanimously to give their allegiance to Yazīd, as did the people of Basra and

²¹⁴ Gramsci, *Selection from the Prison Notebooks*, 239.

²¹⁵ Gramsci notes elsewhere: "A social group can, and indeed must, already 'lead' (i.e., be hegemonic) before winning government power"; Gramsci, *Selection from the Prison Notebooks*, 47.

²¹⁶ According to al-Ṭabarī, Mughīra b. Shu'ba (d. 50/671) ardently supported the idea that Yazīd should succeed Mu'āwiya. He met Yazīd and persuaded him to discuss the matter of succession with his father. Ibn Athīr also reports a detailed conversation between Mughīra and Yazīd on the issue of succession. Mughīra argued that after the leading companions of the Prophet had died their progeny had taken their places, and therefore urged Mu'āwiya to nominate Yazīd as his successor in a similar fashion, otherwise the Muslim community might have to face internal conflict like the *fitna* (civil war) they had confronted following the death of 'Uthmān. Mughīra, as governor of Kūfa, assured Mu'āwiya of his support in respect of the people of Kufa (al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 247/3; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, p. 249/3). It seems that Mu'āwiya was convinced by Mughīra's argument since he ordered him to return to Kūfa and make the necessary arrangements for the succession (al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 247/3.)

Kūfa. At this stage, Mu^ʿāwīya wrote letters to his governors ordering them to send delegations of nobles from the garrison towns to the capital, Damascus. Mu^ʿāwīya communicated his views to them, and praised Yazīd’s merits, by which diplomatic method he managed to obtain the delegation’s loyalty to Yazīd.²¹⁷ Al-Ṭabarī reports that in the year 56/675, Mu^ʿāwīya made the official document of Yazīd’s nomination public,²¹⁸ and all ashraf and the elites across Syria and Iraq duly swore allegiance to Yazīd. Mu^ʿāwīya then embarked for Ḥijāz, and having performing the ḥajj, he addressed the people of Medina, reminding them of their close mutual relationship, and declaring that Yazīd was their cousin, adding that: “The best leaders have already taken the oath of allegiance to Yazīd and I want you to select him as caliph as well.”²¹⁹ The people of Ḥijāz extended their allegiance to Yazīd, but with five notable exceptions: Ḥusayn b. ^ʿAlī, ^ʿAbd Allah b. Zubayr, ^ʿAbd Allah b. ^ʿUmar, ^ʿAbd Allah b. Abbās and ^ʿAbd al-Raḥman b. Abī Bakr.²²⁰

On the issue of Yazīd’s appointment, the oppositional forces started their mobilisation under the leadership of these five individuals. The opposition was composed largely of pro-^ʿAlid Kūfans, Qurayshīs of the Ḥijāz including Anṣār, and those Umayyads who were kept out of government. They considered that the appointment of Yazīd signified the extension of the Syrian regime, and accused Mu^ʿāwīya of wanting to establish a hereditary monarchy, arguing that he should call for a shūra that would decide on a suitable candidate for caliph. However, they were unable to stand against Mu^ʿāwīya who, as noted above, had extraordinary negotiating ability so that a great majority of people across the caliphate consented to his hegemony. Through his considerable coercive power Mu^ʿāwīya was able to eliminate all such opposing forces but always preferred to seek agreement with negotiation. He also advised Yazīd not to use coercive power against the opposition.²²¹

²¹⁷ Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 250-251/3.

²¹⁸ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 248/3.

²¹⁹ Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 250-252/3.

²²⁰ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 248, 260/3.

²²¹ Mu^ʿāwīya advised Yazīd that the Iraqīs would attempt to involve Ḥusayn b. ^ʿAlī against him: “If he revolts against you, defeat him and forgive him because of his close relationship. ^ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abū Bakr does not have any original ideas and relies upon his friends’ opinions. ^ʿAbd Allāh b. ^ʿUmar is a submissive and pious man, and he will not be dangerous for you. As far as ^ʿAbd Allah b. Zubayr is concerned, he is a deceitful person, he will fight against you. So be careful and if you capture him, tear him into little pieces” (al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, p. 260/3).

Due to his father's strategising, Yazīd (b. 22/642) became caliph in the year 60/679 in Damascus after Mu'āwīya's death.²²² According to al-Ṭabarī, Yazīd was at that time thirty-five or thirty-six years old.²²³ The Syrian army served as his coercive force, and, contrary to his father's advice, Yazīd used the army against opposition from Iraq and Ḥijāz. Meanwhile Ḥusayn had left the Ḥijāz to gather support in Kūfa. 'Ubayd Allah b. Ziyād took speedy action, killing Ḥusayn and his small group at Karbala on 10 Muḥarram 61/10 October 680. With the death of Ḥusayn, Damascus effectively consolidated its position in Iraq. However, the situation in Ḥijāz was deteriorating. Ibn Zubayr refused to accept Yazīd's authority, and established himself in Mecca where the anti-Umayyad forces began to gather around him.

In Medina, the Medinese, especially the Anṣār, were disappointed with Mu'āwīya's agricultural activities. Al-Ya'qūbī records that Yazīd had appointed 'Uthmān b. Muḥammad b. Abī 'Uthmān as governor of Medina. When Ibn Manīyā, an 'amil (manager) of Mu'āwīya's land in Medina, complained to 'Uthmān that the people of Medina were preventing him from taking the wheat and date crops harvested from Mu'āwīya's land away from the city, 'Uthmān sent a group of soldiers to control the situation; this group were strong resistance from the local population, who also assaulted the Umayyad administration in Medina, compelling them to leave the city.²²⁴ Yazīd and his governors tried but failed to weaken their resistance, and eventually the battle of the Ḥarra took place in Dhū al-Ḥijja 63/ August 683, during which Medina was sacked by Syrian forces. Although the Syrian troops were ready to march towards Mecca to end Ibn Zubayr's game, the news of Yazīd's death (in Rabī' al-Awwal 64/November 683) changed the course of the Syrian army as well as Muslim history. Soon after the death of his father, Mu'āwīya b. Yazīd became caliph, but according to reports, only reigned for either forty days or three months. Yazīd's other sons were too young to take responsibility,²²⁵ thus the Sufyānid branch of the Umayyads ceased, while the Marwānid branch emerged.

3.4 The Shift from the Sufyānid to the Marwānid Caliphate

²²² al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 269/3.

²²³ *ibid.*, 269/3.

²²⁴ Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, 297-298/2.

²²⁵ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 362-364/3.

To secure power for his own family's lineage, Mu'āwīya had nominated his son Yazīd for the succession,²²⁶ but his efforts were not sustainable for very long. His grandson Mu'āwīya b. Yazīd died without nominating a successor,²²⁷ and since no male of majority age remained in the Sufyānid family following Mu'āwīya's death, the Umayyads temporarily lost their control of political affairs. Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, one of the most senior members of the Umayyad family, strove to ensure the survival of Umayyad authority in Syria. but died in 685 C.E. having failed in his attempt to restore the dignity and rule of the Umayyad family. After his death, his son 'Abd al-Malik became caliph. From that moment, the Arab dynasty remained under the family of Marwān to the end of Umayyad rule. The Marwānid period also saw the continuation of Mu'āwīya's policies. Although the Syrians worked as a vanguard party of the Marwānid till the period of the third fitna during the final eight years of the Umayyad era, significantly they were removed from their traditional position during Marwān b. Muḥammad's rule. This change is also regarded as an important strategic element in the Umayyads' eventual decline.

'Abd al-Malik and his son al-Walīd, who ruled the Arab Caliphate during 685-715, consolidated their authority and made significant conquests. During his first ten years of rule, 'Abd al-Malik settled the internal conflicts and revolts, and then attempted to consolidate control the dynasty's frontiers. Their well-trained Syrian troops marched into North Africa, defeating the Berbers and advancing the Arab front to Tangier, where the military campaign was so successful that many Berbers converted to Islam and subsequently played a crucial role in the conquest of Andalusia.²²⁸ During the first half of 'Abd al-Malik's reign there were no uniform centralised policies; in practice, his policies varied depending upon prevailing circumstances in the region and the nature of the conflicts. For example, 'Abd al-Malik's policies towards Ḥijāz, Iraq and Khurāsān were aggressive since there was rebellion and unrest, whereas the situation in the provinces of Syria, Egypt, and North Africa was relatively peaceful and the government was consequently able to introduce productive and favourable reforms for regional development. During the more stable second half of 'Abd al-Malik's reign, the caliph introduced numerous socio-political reforms in an

²²⁶ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 60/4; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 247/3.

²²⁷ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 356-358/4; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 364/3.

²²⁸ al-Balādhurī, *Futuḥ al-Buldān*, 317-332.

attempt to establish a distinctive, centralised administrative structure. He maintained law and order while also promoting a more encouraging environment for the development and flourishing of Arab culture.

Al-Walīd continued his father's policies. However, both ʿAbd al-Malik and al-Walīd were unfortunate in that all their achievements in the fields of art, architecture and culture were either disregarded or else studied on the basis of harsh sectarian theological sentiments by the historiographers of that period, such as al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Ṭabarī, and al-Masʿūdī. The next four caliphs, namely Sulaymān b. ʿAbd al-Malik, ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, Yazīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik and Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik, all attempted to follow the model of ʿAbd al-Malik and al-Walīd, and implemented very few modifications.

Yazīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik (d. 105/723) nominated his brother Hishām for the succession and took the oath that al-Walīd b. Yazīd would become his successor.²²⁹ In fact, Yazīd was very keen to nominate his own son, al-Walīd, but the latter was only fifteen years old when Yazīd died.²³⁰ Thus, Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik succeeded his brother Yazīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik as caliph in the year 105/723 at the age of thirty four and during the lifetime of many leading Umayyad family members.²³¹

Hishām made many considered changes in his administrative team in order to accelerate the expansionist policy of the previous regime. He dismissed ʿUmar b. Hubayra, the governor of Iraq and Muslim b. Saʿīd, governor of Khurāsān, appointed Khālīd b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Qasrī as governor of Iraq, and placed his brother Asad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Qasrī in charge of Khurāsān.²³² Al-Ṭabarī highlights the nepotism influencing Asad's appointment via his brother Khālīd b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Qasrī.²³³ Hishām undertook fiscal reforms to revive the economy and to continue his expansionist

²²⁹ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 222/4.

²³⁰ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 222/4, Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 256/4.

²³¹ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 111/4. Note: many leading members of the Umayyad family played a significant role during the rule of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik; among them were Maslama b. ʿAbd al-Malik, Marwān b. Muḥammad, al-Walīd b. Yazīd, ʿAbbās b. al-Walīd, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. al-Walīd, Yazīd b. Walīd, Dāwūd b. Sulaymān, and ʿAbd al-Walīd b. Sulaymān.

²³² *ibid.*, 111, 112, 119/4.

²³³ *ibid.*, 124/4.

policy. Al-Ṭabarī revealed on the authority of ʿAbd Allah b. ʿAlī that Hishām was the most financially prudent of the Umayyad rulers, and that both the accuracy of the accounts and the correct level of fiscal consumption under his rule were exemplary.²³⁴

According to Yazīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik’s will, his son al-Walīd b. Yazīd was walī al-ʿahd²³⁵ of Hishām. However, Hishām’s confidence in al-Walīd was minimal, due to the younger man’s reckless nature and involvement in illegal and irreligious activities.²³⁶ In addition, he presumably wanted to nominate his own elder son Maslama.²³⁷ However, he did not alter the document of his brother’s will, and al-Walīd therefore succeeded him in 125/742.²³⁸ Hāshim b. ʿAbd al-Malik attempted to preserve pre-existing Umayyad authority patterns, but hostility emerged among members of the Umayyad house. The Umayyads, particularly the family members of al-Walīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik, were hostile towards the policies of al-Walīd b. Yazīd, particularly on account of his aggression against Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik’s family. Further, they believed his policies would lead the Umayyad dynasty towards total destruction and collapse. Thus, the third fitna (civil war) began with Yazīd b. al-Walīd playing a vital role in the whole plan to remove al-Walīd b. Yazīd from power. In the year 126/743 al-Walīd b. Yazīd was brutally killed by Yazīd’s adherents,²³⁹ although when Yazīd b. al-Walīd came to power he attempted to involve many members of the Umayyad family in government.²⁴⁰

Yazīd was apparently successful in incorporating various hostile groups in the nexus of the political system. However, his rebellious movement against a legitimate caliph had a grave impact on the future. His challenge to the authority of a legitimate caliph was certainly contrary to Umayyad tradition, since the legitimate position of a caliph had, for the first time, been challenged

²³⁴ *ibid.*, 218/4.

²³⁵ The *walī al-ʿahd* is the person designated to succeed the caliph after his death or in case of his absence.

²³⁶ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 222/4.

²³⁷ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 2/4; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 222/4.

²³⁸ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 222/4.

²³⁹ *ibid.*, 246/4.

²⁴⁰ ʿAbbās, and Ibrāhīm were his brothers. ʿAbbās had been his adviser, while Ibrāhīm was appointed as governor of al-Urdan and nominated him as his successor. Similarly, he appointed three sons of ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz for key posts; ʿAbd Allāh as governor of ʿIrāq, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz as governor of Medīna, and ʿĀṣim as adviser to his brother ʿAbd Allāh (al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 273/4).

from within the royal Umayyad family; this led ultimately the Marwānid family to internal conflict. Although Yazīd remained successful in deposing al-Walīd II, he became ill and died in Dhū al-Ḥajj of the year 126/743, having ruled for about six months.²⁴¹ He had nominated his brother, Ibrāhīm as well as ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Ḥajjāj b. ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān as his successors in turn.²⁴² However, the precedent had been set for a challenge to the legitimate ruler or his nominee. Marwān b. Muḥammad, the governor of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Jazīra, did not accept Ibrāhīm's legitimacy and initiated a vigorous campaign to end his rule.²⁴³ Marwān b. Muḥammad became caliph by deposing Ibrāhīm and killing his nominated successor ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. al-Ḥajjāj b. ʿAbd al-Malik.²⁴⁴ In essence Ibrāhīm b. al-Walīd failed both to establish his authority and to legitimise his rulership.

Marwān b. Muḥammad, grandson of Marwān I, was the last formidable Umayyad ruler to strive for the survival of Umayyad rule. Marwān had been governor of Azerbaijan and Armenia during the rules of Hishām, al-Walīd II and Yazīd III.²⁴⁵ He attempted to restore Umayyad authority and successfully suppressed anti-Umayyad resistance movements, particularly the Khawārij. However, the whirlwind of internal and external conflicts weakened Umayyad rule by rupturing the traditional structure of their authority while enabling the resistance movements to challenge their governing system by presenting alternatives. A brief examination of the nature of Umayyad's opposition is presented below.

3.5 The Umayyads' Opposition: The Struggle for Authority

Three main elements comprised the Umayyads' most significant opposition. These were the political ambitions of the various tribal groups, the Shiʿīs, and the Khawārij.

²⁴¹ *ibid.*, 272/4.

²⁴² *ibid.*, 270/4.

²⁴³ *ibid.*, 239, 263-264/4.

²⁴⁴ *ibid.*, 270/4.

²⁴⁵ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 150-151, 272/4; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 215/4.

3.5.1 Tribal Politics: The Qays and Yemen

The politics of the Yemen and Qays or tribal *aṣabīya* is a significant and pervasive feature of the politics of the Umayyad era politics, as these tribal groups played a significant role in the rise and fall of the Umayyads. ʿAbbās Maḥmūd al-ʿAqqād believes that the rivalry between the Muḍar and Yamānīya had been inescapable from the time of the Umayyad establishment during the reign of Muʿāwīya,²⁴⁶ since all Umayyad caliphs had to rely on one or another tribal group. Traditionally, Muʿāwīya, the founder of the Umayyad caliphate, relied on the Yemen as did his son Yazīd. However, inter-tribal hostility was more evident in the battle of Marj Raḥīṭ. The Yemen, particularly its Kalb branch, supported Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, whereas the Qays gathered under the leadership of al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qays. The Yemen won the battle, thereby securing a central position in the Damascus political scene. The early Umayyads based their power on these Yemen groups while successfully maintaining equilibrium between the Yemen and Qays groups.

The Qays attempted to gain more power during Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik's era, but because of his cautious political strategy, Hishām prevented both parties from falling into any conflict which might have damaged the survival of the caliphate.²⁴⁷ Al-Walīd b. Yazīd meanwhile could not maintain the traditional authority patterns. Counter to the dynasty's traditional political strategy, he strengthened the Qays and broke the traditional hegemony of the Yemen over the politics of Damascus, due to the latter's alliance with the previous regime and perceived questionable loyalty.²⁴⁸ This political power shift exacerbated Yemenī hostility, a situation beneficial to Yazīd b. al-Walīd who successfully managed to utilise the Yemen force to depose of al-Walīd and his allies.²⁴⁹ The Yemenis then asserted their power and supported Yazīd b. al-Walīd who, with their considerable backing, deposed and killed al-Walīd. Yazīd b. al-Walīd suppressed the Qays in the short period of his reign by killing al-Walīd and depriving his associates of power. However, tribal divisions came to dominate politics. With the change of rule, the Yemen was again able to maintain

²⁴⁶ Abbās Maḥmūd al-ʿAqqād, *Muʿāwīya*, 37-38.

²⁴⁷ Hitti, *The History of Arabs*, 351/3.

²⁴⁸ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 235/4.

²⁴⁹ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 539/5; Ibn Khaldūn, , *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*, 227/3.

their central position,²⁵⁰ but this was short-lived since they lost power again with the arrival of Marwān. After Yazīd's death, when Marwān led a revolt against Ibrāhīm b. al-Walīd to take revenge for al-Walīd and to restore the legitimacy of his heirs, the Qays extended their services and cooperation.

Marwān, who gathered considerable strength from the Qays since his centre of power was al-Jazīra, where they were in the majority, took revenge for al-Walīd's assassination against Yazīd with the help of the dominant Qaysī army of al-Jazīra.²⁵¹ He attempted to re-establish the balance of power between the two groups but the situation was complex and reform came too late. Yemen did not accept Marwān II's legitimacy; they constantly conspired against him, as well as many of those gathered under Sulaymān b. Hishām who finally attached themselves to the Abbasid movement.²⁵² This sort of tribal conflict played a decisive role in the demise of the Umayyad caliphate. According to Al-Mas'ūdī, the rivalry between the Nazār (Qays) and Yemen caused a transfer of rule from the Umayyads to the Hāshimids.²⁵³ Chapter Six of this study considers modern and pre-modern scholarship on the Yemen-Qays tribal conflict through the lens of Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony.

3.5.2 The Shi'ī Movement

After the conflict between 'Alī and Mu'āwiya the Umayyad period saw many Shi'ī movements. Patricia Crone argues that according to the Shi'ī claim, 'Alī had inherited both the religious and political authority of the Prophet. Yet in practice 'Alī was denied political power, being instead a head of state who possessed ultimate authority over the interpretation of Islamic law and doctrine.²⁵⁴ After 'Alī's death, Ḥasan b. 'Alī's agreement with Mu'āwiya eased hostilities between the Shi'īs and the Umayyad house, until the event of Karbala rekindled Shi'ī opposition to the Umayyads. The suffering of Husayn and his family always increased the torment and agony of the oppressed classes. Mukhtār b. Abī 'Ubayd's movement was an attempt to overthrow the Umayyad

²⁵⁰ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 236/4; Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-'Ibar*, 227/3.

²⁵¹ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 271- 272/4.

²⁵² al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, 245/3.

²⁵³ *ibid.*, 245/3.

²⁵⁴ Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, 2.

regime and to put a suitable candidate from the House of the Prophet on the throne, and was regarded as a particular hindrance to the consolidation of ʿAbd al-Mālik’s authority. Having strengthened his rule in Kufa, he appointed Ibrāhīm b. Mālik b. al-Ashtar as commander-in-chief against ʿUbayd Allah b. Ziyād in Muḥarram 67/August 686. At the battle of Mosul on the river Khāzir, Ibrāhīm b. Mālik b. al-Ashtar’s army defeated the opponents, while ʿUbayd Allah was killed on the battlefield.²⁵⁵ This was a great blow for ʿAbd al-Malik who made no further attempt to take control in Iraq for the next five years, by which time Mukhtār and his rival forces had destroyed themselves through internal conflicts.²⁵⁶ For a time ʿAbd al-Malik left Iraqi and Ḥijāzi territory to confront the forces of Ibn Zubayr, Mukhtār, and Khawārij, and to focus on strengthening his power in Syria and Egypt.

Mukhtār espoused the cause of the ʿAlid family. Having been expelled by Ibn Zubayr’s governors, he was now in search of an appropriate leader from the House of the Prophet. ʿAlī b. Husyan and Muḥammad b. Ḥanfīya, who were Ḥusayn’s half brothers were both living in Ḥijāz under the eye of Ibn Zubayr, and as such were both reluctant to get involved in politics. ʿAlī clearly refused to accept Mukhtār’s call, whereas Muḥammad b. Ḥanfīya forwarded his silent consent. Mukhtār duly proclaimed that Muḥammad b. Ḥanfīya was not only a caliph but also a mahdī, who possessed both religious and political authority to guide the people.²⁵⁷ Mukhtār gathered support from various Arab tribes and notably, and in great number, among the mawālīs. He disseminated his claim to be working on behalf of the weak and the mawālīs,²⁵⁸ and defeated ʿUbayd Allah b. Ziyād’s army, before refusing to accept a Qurayshī governor of Ibn Zubayr in Kūfa. His relation with Ibn Zubayr became complicated, culminating in the collapse of Mukhtār’s authority and his murder in 67/687.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁵ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 482/3.

²⁵⁶ Kennedy, *The Prophet*, 94.

²⁵⁷ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 465/3.

²⁵⁸ According to al-Ṭabarī there were about 20,000 warriors in Mukhtār’s army when he confronted Muṣʿab’s army. Mukhtār was defeated and took refuge in the palace of Kūfa with his followers. Muṣʿab besieged the palace and finally captured it four months later. Mukhtār was killed and his army which included around seven hundred Arabs and six thousand *mawālī* surrendered. Muṣʿab ordered them all to be put to death. These reports validate the opinion that Mukhtār’s army included a great many *mawālī*. (al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 495-496/3).

²⁵⁹ *ibid.*, 496/3.

The end of Mukhtār in Kūfa represented a great success for Ibn Zubayr, since it brought both Iraq and Ḥijāz under his control. However, the Khawārij were still there to challenge his authority in the Arabian peninsula and Iraq, and the failure of Zubayrid rule was the result of underestimating Khawārij strength and their intransigent attitude towards this important constituency. On the other hand, the socio-political affairs of Syria and Egypt remained stable, with ʿAbd Malik consolidating his rule through the introduction of economic and administrative reforms. When ʿAbd al-Malik observed the weakened strength of both Ibn Zubayr and the Khawārij, he marched towards Kufa, killing Muṣʿab in 72/691 and ʿAbd Allah b. Zubayr in 73/692. In so doing, he achieved a certain level of stability since, as Kennedy notes:

the unity of the community had been restored. Once again the dissensions in Iraq had allowed the Umayyads and their Syrian supporters to dominate the richer and more populous areas to the east. It now remained for ʿAbd al-Malik to consolidate his gains and make his rule effective.²⁶⁰

Meanwhile Montgomery Watt argues that the Shiʿī remained quiet in the traumatic aftermath of Karbalā. However, after the death of Yazīd in 684 under the leadership of Sulaymān b. Ṣuraḍ al-Khuzāʿī, the Shiʿīs of Kufa prepared themselves for military action against the Umayyad. Their movement was based on two concepts: first they wished to show their repentance for al-Ḥusayn's betrayal (resulting in their much-used collective label of tawwābūn or Penitents), and secondly they sought revenge for the Martyr's blood. The tawwābūn forces of 4,000 troops duly marched against ʿUbayd Allah b. Ziyād who was in Syria with his army, but in 685 were defeated and most of their leaders killed.²⁶¹

Following their defeat there was a long period of quiescence during which there were no significant Shiʿī revolts until the later Umayyad era. However, the Kaysānīya, who followed Muḥammad b. Ḥanafīya, a son of ʿAlī b. Abū Ṭālib by his wife from the Ḥanafīya tribe, played an active oppositional role during the rule of the Umayyads. Muḥammad al-Bāqir's brother, Zayd b. ʿAlī, also took arms against the Umayyads and led a rebellion but was killed in 121/740.²⁶² Later,

²⁶⁰ Kennedy, *The Umayyads Caliphate*, 98.

²⁶¹ Watt, Montgomery, "Shi'ism under the Umayyads", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, No.3/4 (Oct. 1960), 158-172 at 158.

²⁶² Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 66/3.

several non-Fāṭimid descendants of ʿAlī and Banū Hāshim launched various successful uprisings against the Umayyads; they included ʿAbd Allah b. Muʿāwīya and the ʿAbbāsids, who attracted a significant number of people on the basis of their claim that the people of the Prophetic family possessed the legitimate right to rule.

3.5.3 The Khawārij

The Khawārij movement arose when conflict emerged between ʿAlī and Muʿāwīya on the issue of taḥkīm.²⁶³ The movement remained constantly hostile towards ʿAlī and the Umayyad rejection of their authority and claim to legitimacy. Even though their strength was significantly crushed by ʿAlī, Zubayr, and the Umayyads it was not altogether eliminated, and their role as an anti-Umayyad movement was an important one. Historically, there were many Khawārij guerrilla groups during the early Marwānid period, the most influential of which were the Najdīya and Azāriqa, devotees of Najda b. ʿĀmir al-Ḥanafī from the Ḥanafīya tribe.²⁶⁴ The Ḥanīfa tribe had a long history of conflict with the Muslim rule of Medina; they refused to pay zakat tax to Muslims and participated in the war of ridda (apostasy) during the period of Abū Bakr, the first Muslim caliph. They fought Muslims and supported Musaylima, who claimed the Prophecy. Such tribes, to which most of the Khawārij originally belonged, were termed ridda (apostate). The Najdīya were based in Yamāma – on the eastern side of the Arabian peninsula – among the Ḥanīfa and Bakr tribes, while their field of activity included Yamāma, Ḥaḍramūt, Yemen, Baḥrain, Ṭāʾif, and ʿUmān. Their control extended from Yamāma to ʿUmān and Yemen. The second branch of the Khawārij was the Azāriqa. Active and strong in the Ahwāz and Fārs, with influence extending towards Iṣbahān and Kirmān, they were so called because of their allegiance to Nāfiʿ b. al-Azraq, a prominent Khawārij leader whose own tribe was Banī Ṣarīm b. Maqāʿis and who was killed in 65 AH.²⁶⁵

²⁶³ A committee consisting of Abū Mūsā Ashʿarī and ʿAmar b. al-ʿĀṣ was constituted to resolve the conflict between ʿAlī and Muʿāwīya but was unable to do so. However, when a dispute emerged among ʿAlī's army, some of his supporters deserted him. They were called the Khawārij. They challenged the authority of both ʿAlī and Muʿāwīya. For details, cf. Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Sharastānī, *al-Milal wa-al-Niḥal* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifh, 1985), 170-222.

²⁶⁴ Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 126/11; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 165/4.

²⁶⁵ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 398, 424/3. Note that besides the Najdīya and Azāriqa, there were also two prominent groups of Khawārij. The Ṣufriya were in Mūṣil and Jazīra, and those who associated with the Ṣufriya were the followers of

Najda was declared caliph of the Khawārij by his sect in 66/685. He marched on Bahrain, attacking the Ka^cb b. Rabī^ca tribe and defeating them at Dhu al-Majāz. Najda went again to Bahrain the following year, targeting the tribe of ^cAbd al-Qays and crushing their forces.²⁶⁶ This worried ^cAbd Allah b. Zubayr. Meanwhile, in 67/686 Ḥamza b. ^cAbd Allah, governor of Baṣra, sent a fourteen thousand-strong army, commanded by ^cAbd Allah b. ^cUmayr al-Laithī, against Najda but it was defeated.²⁶⁷ Najda now organised his forces for a great offensive, sending his troops, commanded by ^cAtṭīya b. al-Aswad al-Ḥanafī, to ^cUmān, which was successfully conquered. However, a conflict emerged between Atṭīya and Najda over distribution of the spoils of war. According to al-Balādhurī, ^cAtṭīya accused Najda of distributing the loot money (^caṭā³) unequally. At this stage, ^cAtṭīya left Najda's army and went to Kirmān where he achieved great success. He even initiated economic reforms by introducing his own coins, called al-darāhim al-^caṭṭwīya. However, such dominance did not prove sustainable. Al-Muhallab's army defeated ^cAtṭīya in Kirmān, obliging him to retreat to Sistān and then to Sind. Finally, he was assassinated in Qindābīl.

Najda, on the other hand, continued to triumph in the Arabian Peninsula. In about 68/687, he took control of the northern parts of Bahrain, Ṣan^cā³, and Ḥaḍramūt and collected taxes from the tribes of these regions.²⁶⁸ In the same year, he performed the ḥajj with his 680 supporters, independently of both Ibn Zubayr and ^cAbd al-Malik.²⁶⁹ This symbolic show of strength was well received, and, for example, inspired tributes on his way back to Bahrain from Ṭā³if, Tabāla, and al-Surāt and enabled him to collect taxes from the Hilāl tribe in Najrān. In a show of strength, Najda also ordered the cessation of the mīra (food provisions) for Mecca and Medina.²⁷⁰ Ironically, Najda was deposed and killed in 72/691 by his own followers, who accused him of drinking wine,

Ṣāliḥ ibn Mussariḥ, who was succeeded by Shabīb b. Yazīd al-Shaybānī. The Ibādīyah sect of the Khawārij was founded by ^cAbd Allah ibn Ibāḍ al-Murī al-Tammīmī. This group was comparatively non-violent and provided a theological and jurisprudential foundation for the Khawārij standpoint (al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 554-555/3).

²⁶⁶ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 130-126/11; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 166/4.

²⁶⁷ Ya^cqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 325/2; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 133/11; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 497/3; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 166-167/4.

²⁶⁸ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 134-137, 142/11 ; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 167-168/4.

²⁶⁹ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 137/11; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* 508- 509/3; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 168, 244-245/4. Note that according to al-Ya^cqūbī, in the year 68, there were four banners for four groups in ^cArafāt: Muḥammad b. al-Hanfiyya, Ibn Zubayr, Najda b. ^cĀmir al-Ḥarūrī, and the Umayyads. al-Ya^cqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 441/2.

²⁷⁰ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 139/11; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 168-169/4.

distributing loot money unevenly,²⁷¹ and corresponding with ʿAbd al-Malik to whom he handed over the daughter of ʿAmr b. ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān.²⁷²

As their new leader the Najdīya chose Thābit al-Tammār, who was a mawālī. After this, in 72AH, they chose Abū Fudayk as their leader.²⁷³ Abd Ameer Abd Dixon asserts that the Khawārij had quickly realised they were at fault by selecting a mawlā to lead them. They therefore asked Thābit to choose an Arab leader for them, which shows that tribal feelings, for the Khawārij, were stronger than doctrine.²⁷⁴

Najda's murder and internal conflicts among the Khawārij were detrimental to its unity in the Arabian Peninsula. On the other hand, the same events reinvigorated the Zubayrid camp. Muṣʿab b. Zubayr, who governed Baṣra for his brother, perceived the internal conflict of the Khawārij as an opportunity to crush their strength in the region once and for all. He therefore dispatched Baṣran troops, commanded by Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Iskaf, against ʿAbd Allah b. Thawr Abū Fudayk al-Khārijī of Banū Qays b. Thaʿlaba in 72/691, but the Baṣran army was defeated in the battle.²⁷⁵ Muṣʿab b. Zubayr then sent a larger army against Abū Fudayk. The latter's army again defeated the Baṣran army. Muṣʿab b. Zubayr's desire to eliminate the power of the Khawārij from Yamāma and Bahrain was thus achieved. Meanwhile, ʿAbd al-Malik marched to Basra, where the public was largely dissatisfied with Muṣʿab, with the exception of Ibrāhīm b. al-Ashtar, who had come to a secret agreement with ʿAbd al-Malik against Muṣʿab. In this situation Muṣʿab, having already dispatched his best troops under the leadership of al-Muhallab b. Abī Ṣufra against the Azāriqa, proved easy prey.

Ibn Zubayr then formed an alliance against the Azāriqa with Al-Muhallab b. Abī Ṣufra, the chief of the Azad tribe who had migrated from ʿUmān to Basra in the late fifties of the hijra during

²⁷¹ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 829/2; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 142-143/11; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 169-170/4.

²⁷² Note: al-Yaʿqūbī reported that Najda attacked Yamāma and reached Ṭāʾif, and that among the prisoners of war was the daughter of ʿAmr b. ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, who retrieved her by paying one hundred thousand *dirhams* from his own pocket to ʿAbd al-Malik and then returned to Bahrain. Cf. al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 447/2.

²⁷³ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 530/3.

²⁷⁴ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 143/11; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 169/4; Dixon, *The Umayyads Caliphate*, 173. Note: al-Baghdādī states that Najda chose Abū Fudayk, not Thābit al-Tammār, to succeed him. Al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq*, 69.

²⁷⁵ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 398/3.

Mu‘āwiya’s rule. He held a significant position in Baṣra and had solid relations with his relatives in ‘Umān. The Azāriqa had consolidated their position in Iraq and its surroundings, and Al-Muhallab managed to wage successful wars against them. Even so, and despite numerous defeats, they were still a constant threat to Zubayrid authority, and even after the end of Zubayrid rule, they survived as a guerrilla force, retaining the potential to challenge the authority of the Umayyads in the region. By contrast, Muṣ‘ab b. Zubayr was defeated by ‘Abd al-Malik at Dayr al-Jāthaliq. Both Muṣ‘ab and his son ‘Isā were killed on the battlefield in 72/691.²⁷⁶

Kennedy observes that while the Zubayrid army was busy curtailing al-Mukhtār and the Khawārij, ‘Abd al-Malik took the opportunity to consolidate his political and military position in Syria. Attempting to minimise the hostility between the Yemen and Qays and to reconcile them in a manner that would enhance his authority in Syria and al-Jazīra, he tried by all means possible to win the support of tribal chiefs (ashrāf), for example through bribery or by offering them high positions in the court or army. For instance, an agreement was signed between the Syrian government and Zufar b. Ḥārith al-Kilābī and his Qaysī adherents. According to which the latter agreed to withdraw Ibn Zubayr’s support in exchange for a high position at court and in the Umayyad army. This agreement fulfilled two important objectives for ‘Abd al-Malik. First, he integrated the unhappy Qaysīs with the mainstream Syrian administration. Secondly, he destroyed Zubayrid strength in the region. A similar policy was then applied in Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula when, for example, ‘Abd al-Malik successfully integrated al-Muhallab into his armed forces. Moreover, he isolated Ibn Zubayr from the rest of his army, leading to his defeat by a small force under the command of Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf. The latter attacked Mecca without considering the sanctity of the Ka‘ba, an act that in Jumādā al-Awwal 73/October 692 precipitated the end of Zubayr and his rule.²⁷⁷ In this way ‘Abd al-Malik consolidated his power and eliminated his enemies. However, the Khawārij still remained to challenge the authority of Damascus, which is why ‘Abd al-Malik dispatched armed forces to eliminate this threat. It appears that the Khawārij also attached themselves to the Najda and Azāriqa, in order to combat efficient Damascus policy.

²⁷⁶ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 271, 280, 332, 335-6, 337, 338-9/4; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 522, 527, 531/3; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 265- 266/4.

²⁷⁷ Kennedy, *The Prophet*, 97, 98.

Khālīd b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Asīd, governor of Basra, fought several campaigns against Abū Fudayk and Azāriqa, but was defeated and suffered heavy losses.²⁷⁸ ʿAbd al-Malik then appointed ʿUmar b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Maʿmmar to campaign against the Najda Khawārij. ʿUmar went to Bahrain and in al-Mashshaqar attacked and killed Abū Fudayk, whose followers were defeated so decisively that they never again stood in the Arabian Peninsula with such zeal.²⁷⁹

By this time the Azāriqa had extended their influence from Basra to Khuzitān, Karman and Fārs. ʿAbd al-Malik confirmed the position of al-Muhallab, who had already fought against the Khawārij during Zubayrid rule. ʿAbd al-Malik restored Muhallab's position, directing the governor of Baṣra, Khālīd b. ʿAbd Allāh, and the governor of Kufa, Bishar b. Marwān, to take whatever steps were needed to crush the Azāriqa in Iraq and beyond.²⁸⁰ After the death of Bishr b. Marwān in Basra, ʿAbd al-Malik appointed al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf as governor of Iraq in 75/694.²⁸¹ Al-Ḥajjāj accelerated the attacks on the Khawārij by conferring more authority, arms and equipment to al-Muhallab and the other commanders. In this way, they crushed the source of the Azāriqa's strength. Discord among the Azāriqa enabled Al-Muhallab to defeat them by capitalising on internal divisions related to preferred styles of governance and legal interpretation. The conflict caused them to splinter into several factions, the two most important being the Qaṭrī b. al-Fujā'a group and the ʿAbd Rabbih al-Kabīr group.²⁸² Qaṭrī's followers were mostly Arabs, while ʿAbd Rabbih al-Kabīr was supported by eight thousand mawālīs. ʿAbd Rabbih al-Kabīr compelled Qaṭrī and his adherents to leave the city of Jiruft for Ṭabaristān.²⁸³ This further weakened the Azāriqa, and in this situation, Al-Muhallab attacked ʿAbd Rabbih al-Kabīr, killed him, and then marched towards Ṭabristān to attack Qaṭrī with the military assistance of Ḥallāj's other commanders.²⁸⁴ As a result, the Azāriqa lost their prominent leaders. Although the military strength of the Khawārij had dissolved, they managed to survive and were to remain a constant thorn in the side of the Umayyad

²⁷⁸ al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 325/2; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 546/3.

²⁷⁹ al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 326/2; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 294-295/4; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 546/3.

²⁸⁰ Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 297/4; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 551/3.

²⁸¹ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 547/3.

²⁸² al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 329/2; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 606/3; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 355/4.

²⁸³ al-Yaʿqūbī, 329/2; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 606/3; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 354-355/4.

²⁸⁴ al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 329-330/2; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 611-612/3.

caliphate, prompting ʿAbd al-Malik to apply a ‘carrot and stick’ policy until their strength finally ebbed away.

The Khawārij threat was strongest during the period of ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān, who had to confront their formidable strength on various fronts and in different ways. Among their various groups were the Najdiyya, who held a dominant position in Yamāmā, Ḥaḍramūt, part of Yemen, Bahrain, Ṭāʾif, and ʿUmān, while the Azāriqa were more influential in Ahwāz, Fārs, Isbahān and Kirmān. Muṣal and the Jazīra, on the other hand, were considered strongholds of the Ṣufriyya. Nevertheless, and even with their distinctive stance on political issues, Kūfa was the centre of the Ibādiyya, who, despite the united front presented by their collective forces, were eventually defeated by ʿAbd al-Malik. Mukhār, Ibn Zubayr, and other notable leaders of the Khawārij such as Qaṭrī b. al-Fujāʾa and ʿAbd Rabbih al-Kabīr, were all killed, although this did not signify the end of the oppositional forces, whose influence was reduced but not eliminated.

The Khawārij and Shiʿīs, as adherents of the Household of the Prophet, were quiescent during the period of ʿAbd al-Malik’s sons, from the reign of al-Walīd to the end of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik’s period in Rabīʿ II 125 AH/ February 743 CE. At that point conflict broke out among the house of the Umayyads. The manner and circumstances of the third fitna and its subsequent link to Umayyad decline have already been noted here. In the depiction and interpretation of Umayyad historiography, both Pre-modern and Modern sources focus more on these themes, which are analysed more systematically in the following chapters.

3.6 Gramsci’s Theory of Cultural Hegemony and the Background to the Umayyad caliphate

This section looks at formation of the Umayyad caliphate, and at the broader context and the manner in which it assumed control of the Muslim state. To do so, Gramsci’s theory of cultural hegemony is applied. Gramsci argues that political thoughts must be evaluated as historical phenomena through a critical examination of historical conditions, and that text can only be adequately understood through a systematic evaluation of its historical context.

The tribal rivalry between the Umayyads and the Hāshimids is well documented in the sources. The pre-Islamic political authority of the Umayyads in the tribal structure of Mecca was challenged

by a Hāshimid, the Prophet Muḥammad. Until the conquest of Makka, the vast majority of Umayyads did not accept the Prophet, who presented the shūra system as a viable alternative to the traditional ruling structure.²⁸⁵ Perhaps it is this, above all, that inspires certain scholars, among them Afzaal, to interpret the origin of Islam as a social movement in the Arabian Peninsula during the life of the Prophet Muḥammad.

According to Afzaal, who applies Gramsci's theory of hegemony to evaluate the rise of Islam in a historical context, Islam addressed the socio-religious crisis of the Prophet's time; thus his role in socio-political activism was a natural consequence of his religio-ethical understanding.²⁸⁶ Afzaal also notes that Gramsci's three-fold scheme (i.e., alternative ideology, organisation, and strategy for a reformatory movement) can be applied to Islam. Muḥammad provided strong intellectual grounds for challenging the status quo by presenting acceptable alternatives to the existing legitimacy, and established a group of dedicated people as a vanguard party in order to execute his plan with an organized strategy.²⁸⁷ The Prophet's Companions were the efficient individuals who stood up to prevailing conditions and addressed socio-political issues by referring to the prophetic tradition. The Umayyads, too, formed part of the Muslim community. During ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān's rule they had almost regained their leading pre-Islamic political position, but by virtue of Islam, their domain of authority widened, and with the conquest of Iran and Syria, a multi-cultural society emerged. In this context, the Umayyads consolidated their authority based on their tribal supremacy and Arab identity, and introduced their own moral, intellectual, and socio-cultural values which helped them to promote and consolidate their rule.

Muʿāwīya, as noted, introduced reforms according to traditional patterns. He made agreements with various conflicting groups, and empowered the tribal leaders (ashrāf) by forging alliances with them. These ashraf played the role of intellectuals for the Umayyads, a role which, in its capacity of presenting the worldview of the ruling class, constitutes one of the most significant

²⁸⁵ In the *shūra* system, the pious elders and intellectuals from the community are given representation in *shūra* and are consulted on all significant socio-political and religious matters.

²⁸⁶ Afzaal, "The Origin of Islam as a Social Movement", 207.

²⁸⁷ For a better appreciation of Gramsci's thought, cf., Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*; Femia, "Hegemony and Consciousness", 29-48; Idem, *Gramsci's Political Thought: Hegemony, Consciousness, and the Revolutionary Process* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).

aspects of Gramsci's theory of hegemony; i.e., that the working classes and the peasantry cannot be ruled merely on the basis of physical force; the domination of the ruling class can only be established on the basis of cultural and ideological acquiescence. He tries to define the link between intellectuals and methods of production more clearly, arguing that the former are indirectly connected with fundamental social groups, and identifying their chief role as one of mediation between the ruling and ruled classes: "the intellectuals are the dominant group's 'deputies' exercising the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political government."²⁸⁸

By virtue of his position as a Companion of the Prophet, Mu'āwiya attached to himself the leading companions of the Prophet. He faced less criticism particularly after Ḥasan b. 'Alī had accepted his authority, and was left with only the Khawārij as opponents. His struggle against the Khawārij made him acceptable even in the 'Alids camp. In this way he constructed a suitable image, even in the eyes of his enemies, with effecting significant administrative and economic reforms, such as establishing a decentralised governmental structure in which the provinces were given the utmost autonomy. In Gramscian terms, Mu'āwiya successfully established his hegemony by presenting an acceptable structure (economic base) along with a superstructure (the ideology of the ruling class). Marxist theory constructs the hegemony of the ruling class as predicated on the dialectical relationship between structure and superstructure. An 'organic relationship' develops between the economic base and cultural ideas, and as a result, an 'historic bloc' comes into existence that assists the hegemon to strengthen its authority over the masses.²⁸⁹ Contrary to traditional Marxist theory, however, is Gramsci's assertion that the role of superstructure is central in establishing the authority of the hegemon. He rejects the claim concerning the centrality of structure, around which ideology and culture revolve, affirming instead the supremacy of superstructure.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ Gramsci, Selection from the Prison Notebooks, 118.

²⁸⁹ Butko notes that "While Gramsci's interpretation of the economic structure is quite clear, two prominent examples Gramsci utilizes in terms of arguing for the importance of the superstructure are the educational and judicial systems. Both systems not only provide a 'punitive' element, but each also assists in a more important 'moral' function through their creation of 'a certain type' of civilization and of citizen." Butko, "Revelation or Revolution: A Gramscian Approach to the Rise of Political Islam", 46.

²⁹⁰ Gramsci, Selection from the Prison Notebooks, 407.

Muʿāwīya successfully constructed a plausible image of his character. He restored peace in Arab society by forging agreements with various hostile tribes that had, since the assassination of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, been constantly involved in internal wars and tribal conflicts. The house of the Umayyads proved their supremacy by delivering peace and maintaining law and order throughout the caliphate. Knowing of Muʿāwīya's ruling ability, the majority of oppositional forces accepted his authority; therefore, the masses consented to extend their allegiance to him. Once his authority had been realised by the majority, he used coercive force against those still resisting his rule, while the Syrians played a role as his vanguard party. Muʿāwīya did not revolutionise the previous system through his reforms, but rather, by reorienting and reorganising the administrative structure, created a space that could support the establishment of his own authority. However, the act of appointing Yazīd as his successor marked an innovative step in the Muslim caliphal system, since he adopted a system of succession similar to the Roman model by electing his elder son as his successor, and by virtue of his authority, convinced the ruling elites (the *ashrāf*) to take the oath of Yazīd's succession after him.

After Muʿāwīya, Yazīd consolidated his power through coercion. He resented the people of Hijūz and Iraq and rebellious movements began to appear. Since these counter-hegemonic movements were not well-organised, and could not present any suitable alternative ideology, Yazīd was able to control them by force. However, they gained momentum after Yazīd's death when the caliphate shifted from the Sufyānid to the Marwānid line of the Umayyads.

This precise moment proved opportune for the counter-hegemonic forces to destroy the authority of a hegemon already in crisis. The Zubayrid, Shiʿīs and the Khawārij initiated aggressive movements in Hijāz and Iraq against the Marwānids who, however, in the subsequent Sufyānid period, regained their authority with the help of the Syrian army. ʿAbd al-Malik may be considered the real founder of the Marwānid branch's rule of the Umayyads. Not only did he successfully suppress revolts and uprisings but he also strengthened his authority through creating a space in which the ruled class extended its consent to the ruling class. Indeed, ʿAbd al-Malik's strategy greatly resembles that of Muʿāwīya. Like Muʿāwīya, he consolidated his power in Syria with the help of the Syrian army. Understanding the impossibility of resisting the anti-Umayyad forces in Hijāz and Iraq, he therefore he left Iraq and Hijāz for a period of time in the hands of the anti-

Umayyad forces, a strategy that remained successful, since the anti-Umayyad forces were unable to unite against the Umayyads, and instead competed with each other for power. Similarly he also took advantage of the internal conflicts of anti-Umayyad forces in Iraq and Hijāz, and strengthened his authority in Syria. He began campaigning towards Iraq and Syria only when the anti-Umayyad forces had significantly exhausted their energies in internal conflicts, and then marched to Iraq and Hijāz. He faced furious retaliation from the Khawārij, whom he nevertheless defeated, and restored law and order in the region.

The Marwānids, unlike the Sufyānids, had much a weaker claim to legitimacy. Mu^cāwiya's political authority had been firmly recognised because he was the head of the Sufyānid family, while his religious position was also established by virtue of being related to the Prophet Muḥammad. ^cAbd al-Malik had meanwhile to build up his political and religious image in order to secure religio-political authority. He attracted a number of scholars and intellectuals who argued for his legitimacy, and presented a plausible image aimed at influencing public opinion in his favour. The active support of the intellectuals and religious scholars was thus crucial to his power and legitimacy.

The role of such intellectuals in influencing socio-political processes throughout history has been considered in some detail by Gramsci who considers that "all men are intellectuals but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals."²⁹¹ This means that while all men are intellectuals, only those who play an active role in their professional and socio-political functions are considered intellectuals in a true sense, with two types particularly emphasised by Gramsci, i.e., (i) organic intellectuals, and (ii) essential intellectuals. The first group is created with every new socio-economic class to perpetuate its own legitimacy. These intellectuals provide the basis for the authority of social groups. The second category denotes those intellectuals who have played a specific role in history and have acquired a specific position in the social structure, with one of the most important categories being occupied by religious scholars. Gramsci analyses the religious phenomenon from a Christian and European historical perspective, constructing ecclesiastic intellectuals as organically bound to the aristocracy, with whom they share equal status and state

²⁹¹ *ibid.*, 115.

privileges connected with property. Their uninterrupted social role provides them with a power monopoly and they consider themselves autonomous and independent of the dominant social group. As Gramsci notes, ecclesiastical intellectuals are the most influential in the society because they hold strong control over important services such as defining religious ideology and morals, educating in schools, and working for charity.²⁹²

ʿAbd Malik attempted to acquire the support of intellectuals who could satisfy the masses and convince them to extend their allegiance with consent. The Marwānid had to face strong criticism from their enemies, i.e., the ʿAlīd and the Khawārij. Judd argues that “the urge to systemize and bureaucratize that characterized much of ʿAbd al-Malik’s reign (r. 65/685-86/705) extended to intellectual and religious issues as well. It is no coincidence that ʿAlīds, Kharijites, and other sectarian movement became threats during the Marwānid period.”²⁹³ The majority of scholars criticised the Umayyads for their secular image;²⁹⁴ however, modern scholars, such as Crone and Hinds in *God’s Caliph*, and Steven Judd in *Religious Scholars and the Umayyads*, attempt to portray Umayyad participation in the religious life of the Muslim community. Judd investigates the Umayyads’ scholarly community, i.e., those who supported their rule. He also illustrates the ways in which the Marwānid caliphs encouraged and patronised particular scholars and their students.²⁹⁵ In particular, he provides detailed accounts of five piously-minded, pro-Umayyad scholars, explaining that they had been chosen “because their loyalty to the Umayyad caliphate is obvious, as is their reputation for scholarly acumen and general piety.

These five continued to be recognized as pious, respectable scholars long after the end of the Umayyad era.”²⁹⁶ They were: al-Shaʿbī (d. 103/721 or 109/727); al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742); ʿAbd Allah b. ʿAwn (d. 151/768); al-Awzāʿī (d. 157/774); and Sufyān al-Tawrī (d. 161/778). The close

²⁹² *ibid.*, 114.

²⁹³ Judd, *Religious Scholars and the Umayyads*, 3.

²⁹⁴ Judd notes: “The long tradition of treating the Umayyads as godless, secular figures, built on the works of Goldziher and Wellhausen and more clearly articulated by Watt and especially Hodgson, remains at the heart of scholarship on the Umayyad period. Under this paradigm, pious scholars could not possibly be supporters of the Umayyad dynasty, which, by definition, was the enemy of the religious community it ruled.” Judd, *Religious Scholars and the Umayyads*, 9.

²⁹⁵ *ibid.*, 14.

²⁹⁶ *ibid.*, 39-40.

association of these leading scholars with the Marwānid courts helped the Umayyads to establish their religious authority. Moreover, the Umayyad-era qāḍīs (judges) were important officials who served along with the governors and aristocracy.²⁹⁷ In Gramscian terms, they played the role of ecclesiastical intellectuals who constructed the religious image of the Umayyads and acquired the consent of the masses for Umayyad hegemony and authority.

The Marwānids actually inherited most elements pertaining to the qāḍīs of the judicial system, administrative officials, and the Syrian army as a legacy of their Sufyānid predecessors. These officials and intellectuals created a space in which the Marwānids could successfully establish their hegemony. The anti-Umayyad forces did not have the support of intellectuals and skilled officials. The Khawārij in particular, initiated a struggle against the dominance of the Quraysh ruling class, but were unable to attract intellectuals who could present an appropriate alternative ideology. Gramsci highlights the difficulty of creating a new stratum of intellectuals, explaining that such a group will have to develop and present novel intellectual activity in order to establish its position vis-à-vis the traditional intellectuals. Since, as Gramsci argues, the traditional intellectuals are firmly connected with all social groups and have strong ties with dominant social classes, the new intellectuals have the onerous task of conquering the traditional intellectuals ideologically before successfully persuading the ruled class of their validity:

One of the most important characteristics of any group that is developing towards dominance is its struggle to assimilate and to conquer ‘ideologically’ the traditional intellectuals, but this assimilation and conquest is made quicker and more efficacious the more the group in question succeeds in simultaneously elaborating its own organic intellectuals.²⁹⁸

The Umayyads had to face the opposition of several pious scholars but nevertheless succeeded in attracting notable scholars and traditional intellectuals to their court. Unlike the Rāshidūn caliphs, the Umayyads did not simply base their authority on religious grounds, but instead mobilised a variety of socio-political and religious actors to enhance their legitimacy. The early Umayyads used other propaganda tools to promote their legitimacy, including the poetry of pre-Islamic

²⁹⁷ *ibid.*, 97-130.

²⁹⁸ Gramsci, Selection from the Prison Notebooks, 116.

Arabia, the introduction of new coinage, construction of Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock and an interest in architecture and pre-Islamic Arab vanities (ayyām al-ʿarab). In contrast to their opposition movements, they were not eager to propagate stories from the early Islamic period and the struggles of the Prophet, Muhājirūn, and Anṣār against the Quraysh of Mecca. For instance, al-Masʿūdī records that Muʿāwiya used to listen every night to stories of the Arabs and Persians.²⁹⁹

The Marwānid also followed the tradition of their Sufyānid predecessors. Propaganda through pre-Islamic poetry, coinage and architecture was effective, particularly in the newly-conquered Syrian regions. The Syrian people played a significant role in Umayyad legitimacy. They brought Muʿāwiya to power and they rescued the Umayyad state from decline through their active role at Jābiya. The Syrians did not have much interest in the affairs of Ḥijāz and the early development of Islam. One of the reasons for their preference for the Umayyads over the Hāshimids was their maternal connections with Yazīd. It would thus appear that the Marwānids attracted the people of Ḥijāz and Iraq by attaching the leading scholars to their court, while they won the hearts and minds of the Syrian people and of the newly-conquered regions through judicious deployment of other propaganda tools. Umayyad success, in Gramscian terms, was based on the ability to mobilise both religious and secular socio-political intellectuals to construct a suitable image of the Umayyads among the masses. As a result, the people extended their consent to the Umayyads, while those who were in opposition were pacified either by making agreements or through using coercive means. The Umayyads consolidated their hegemony by devising a suitable strategy and implementing it with the assistance of the Syrians. In the following chapters this contextual study will determine and examine the actual factors for eventual Umayyad decline.

²⁹⁹ al-Masūdī, *Murūj*, 300/2.

4 Chapter Four: The Role of Religious Movements in the Fall of the Umayyads

4.1 Introduction

Narratives on the fall of the Umayyads are many and varied, in both modern and pre-modern historiographies. A prominent feature of that era was the growing number of religious movements, and these, together with religion as a general phenomenon, are commonly acknowledged to have played a vital role both in the fall of the Umayyads and the rise of oppositional forces. In order to analyse the role of religion in the Umayyad decline and to provide greater analytical depth, this chapter focuses on important religious movements which significantly opposed the ruling Umayyads, namely the ʿAbbāsīd movement, the Khawārij and the Qadārīya. It considers the interpretations of modern scholars as well as comparing five pre-modern sources in order to identify the various early historiographic accounts of the role of such religious movements.

This will help in understanding the perspective of modern historiographers and their arguments, but in order to achieve a more nuanced evaluation the study applies an analytical framework derived from the twentieth century Italian political theorist Antonio Gramsci, a scholar who belonged to a radically different intellectual tradition, cultural identity, and historical context. Specifically, it will apply the Gramscian theory of hegemony to the subject in order to arrive at a better understanding the religious movements of the later Umayyad period, and why and how these contributed to the fall of the Umayyads. By demonstrating the ways in which such movements challenged the established authority of the Umayyads, the chapter aims ultimately to assess the viability, in Gramscian terms, of the ideology, organisation and strategy of the oppositional movements as a counterhegemonic ideological force.

Various religious movements opposed the Umayyads. However, three are given greater prominence in the works of the early historiographers as well as modern scholars. These were the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd Movement, the Khawārij, and the Qadārīya, which collectively encompassed a wide range of socio-political and religious aspects. The focus is on studying them as a religious movement viewed through the lens of Gramsci's theory of hegemony. The chapter considers the basic reasons for the failure of the Khawārij and Qadārīya in contrast to the ʿAbbāsīd movement, and analyses the ideology, strategy, and organisational structure of the ʿAbbāsīds, the Khawārij and Qadārīya, evaluating their political struggle according to a Gramscian understanding. To

maintain a coherent and systematic approach, it will analyse these three religious movements using the following format: a consideration of the role of each religious movement as presented in i) pre-modern, and ii) modern sources, and iii) a thematic study of these movements according to Gramscian theory.

4.2 Religion and Religious Movements in Modern Sources

This section aims to evaluate the interpretations of modern historiographers regarding the role played by religion and religious movements in the fall of the Umayyads. Modern historiographers have analysed the events of the Umayyad period, and have indicated possible contributing factors, notably how religion increasingly provided the means to oppose and finally to overthrow Umayyad rule.

The Umayyad period was crucial to the development of Islamic thought. With the expansion of Islamic rule, new centres for the Muslim population came into being, such as Kūfa and Basra; Damascus too gained a central position when the Umayyads came to power. Differently from Arabia, a multicultural, multidimensional and complex society emerged, and as a result, a fresh intellectual and social discourse began to respond to the complexities and questions of that period. Because the political opposition to the Umayyads, such as the Hāshimid, Khawārij, and Qadarīya tended to devise their own narratives on various legal, doctrinal, social and administrative issues in accordance with their particular understanding of Islam, the intellectual debates during that period provided the foundation for subsequent Muslim ideals. An archaeological investigation of Muslim thought would be incomplete without examining the socio-religious narratives informing this crucial and formative period of Muslim ideas. The main intellectual movements to challenge the authority established by Umayyads were the Hāshimid-^cAbbāsīd, Khawārij, and Qadarīs, who attracted sizeable followings, and whose teachings played a vital role in the shaping of Arab political history.

Most modern scholarship presents the Umayyads as a secular phenomenon. Notable adherents to this view include Ignaz Goldziher and Wellhausen. Certainly the ḥadīth scholars considered them a threat to the ideologies and didactic content of their own religious canon, and in response began compiling the Prophetic traditions. With regard to Umayyad efforts to compile ḥadīth, Goldziher suggests that in fact they preserved those ḥadīth which they believed justified their own theological

and ideological stance. In particular, he criticises Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī and other supporters of the Umayyads for their alleged forgery of ḥadīth literature.³⁰⁰ According to Goldziher, the Umayyads were secular and unsupported by religious scholars of the time, whereas the ʿAbbāsids were religious.³⁰¹ Wellhausen, appears to hold a similar opinion, pointing out that the fuqahāʾ (legal scholars) and qurrāʾ were the opponents of the Umayyads. The Umayyads, he claims, were not religious; nevertheless, they had taken religious measures to subdue the religious opposition.³⁰² Joseph Schacht, on the other hand, considered the Umayyads to be religious actors and views their anti-Islamic reputation as a later ʿAbbāsīd historiographic construct.³⁰³ He further claims that Umayyad attempts to establish administrative practice in accordance with Islamic tenets encouraged their opponents from the traditionist movement to form their own administrative and legal practice based on prophetic tradition.³⁰⁴

Meanwhile Marshall Hodgson's criticism of Marwānīd's religious policy is even more pronounced than that of Wellhausen. Coining the term "piety minded opposition"³⁰⁵ to describe the religious identity of the anti-Marwānīd opposition, he identifies divergent religious groups (i.e. the Shīʿī, the Khawārij, the Zubayrid, and the ʿAbbāsīd), and, like Goldziher, argues that the ḥadīth and sīra were preserved out of profound scholastic disillusionment with the secular Marwānīds. Moreover, he asserts that the fuqahāʾ, the qurrāʾ and the muḥaddithīn participated in the 'piety-minded' opposition as a consequence of their connections with active political groups. Hodgson acknowledges that some religious scholars offered their services and support to the Umayyads, most notably ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Awzāʿī who represented the 'Syrian Legists', but is disparaging of these scholars, for associating themselves with the impious Marwānīd and for their lack of social

³⁰⁰ Goldziher, I., *Muhammedanische Studien* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1889-90), trans. S. M. Stern and C. R. Barber as *Muslim Studies* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1967-71), 38-45/1.

³⁰¹ Goldziher, I., *Vorlesungen über den Islam*, Heidelberg, 1910, trans. Andras and Ruth Hamori as *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 45.

³⁰² Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom*, 60-63.

³⁰³ J. Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 23.

³⁰⁴ *ibid.*, 33-36.

³⁰⁵ M. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World of Civilization*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 258-267/1.

influence;³⁰⁶ the piety-minded scholars meanwhile were anti-Umayyad and had more influence in society.

Montgomery Watt's view parallels that of Hodgson, presenting the pious members of society as staunch resisters of the godless Umayyads. Watt describes the emergence of a "general religious movement" which opposed the Umayyads, with various religious anti-Umayyad movements being initiated despite an overall climate of favour towards the ruling dynasties.³⁰⁷ Hawting, another important orientalist, provides valuable analysis of the role of the 'ulamā' in the Umayyad period, and argues that the Sunni religious tradition was formulated by a largely anti-Umayyad scholarly community.³⁰⁸ Tarif Khalidi, on the other hand, argues that there was a battle of fuqahā' during the Umayyad period, during which the religious scholars, both supporters and opponents, were involved in the fabrication of ḥadīth for the purposes of authenticating their arguments. Defending al-ʿAwzāʿī and al-Zuhrī and other supporters of the Umayyads, Khalidi argues that these groups did not actively support the Umayyad regime, but instead maintained peaceful relations with them in a manner similar to that of many other influential Qurayshīs.³⁰⁹

Some modern scholars, such as Shaban and Kennedy did not focus on the religious identity of the Umayyads in their interpretation of Umayyad history,³¹⁰ although modern scholarship on the period also includes the work of Crone and Hinds who used a variety of sources other than the narrowly historical, and incorporated poetry and Greek and Syriac texts, to prove their hypothesis that the Umayyads were both religious and fulfilled the role of "God's Caliph".³¹¹ However, the use of poetry to reconstruct historical realities is a controversial and largely unreliable method, due to the expressively dramatic, frequently embellished, and fictional nature of the genre, while Greek and Syriac sources have similar limitations because of their historic and inherently antagonistic stance towards Muslim religious thought. Even so, despite this caveat, the works of Crone and

³⁰⁶ M. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 319/1.

³⁰⁷ W. M. Watt. *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, (Oxford: Oneworld, 1998), 63-67.

³⁰⁸ Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, 2.

³⁰⁹ Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 21-25, 30.

³¹⁰ cf. Shaban, *Islamic History*; Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphate*.

³¹¹ Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, esp. Ch. 2.

Hinds are considered important for their attempts to provide evidence regarding the religiosity of the Umayyads.

Crone and Hinds also attempted to reconstruct the religious image of the Umayyads. Critical of what they perceived as the overly negative and anti-Islamic portrayal of the Umayyads, they instead argued that religious and political authority was united during the period of the first three Rāshidūn caliphs, reaching its zenith during the Umayyad period, before beginning its irreparable fragmentation. They maintain that the early scholars were critical of the Umayyads and attempted to challenge their religious and legal legitimacy, since by doing so, they created a space in which to exercise their authority as custodians of the religion and assert their legitimacy as a law-giving authority.

‘Ulamā’-ruler conflict became a permanent feature during the Umayyad and ‘Abbāsīd periods, with their respective rulers claiming to be the deputy of God (khalīfat rasūl Allāh). Crone and Hinds claimed that there was substantial evidence in the historical sources and in Arabic literature, as well as in material culture such as inscriptions on coins, all of which supported the idea that the Umayyads and ‘Abbāsīds called themselves khalīfat Allāh in order to assert their authority as representatives of God. In their account, both Umayyad and ‘Abbasid rulers, in an attempt to observe God’s commandments, interpreted the sunna according to their own understanding as the deputies of God, although a conflict emerged between the rulers and the ‘ulamā’ on the issue of the interpretation of Divine commandments. The ‘ulamā’ ultimately remained successful in establishing their authority in religious matters and the rulers were finally deprived of religious authority after the failure of al-Māmūn’s miḥna movement.³¹²

Judd supports the view of Crone and Hinds. Admiring Umayyad contributions to the development of religious and theological spheres, he states that “Islam as we know it today, including both its agreed doctrines and its deepest schisms, is the fruit of the labors of Marwānid-era thinkers addressing Marwānid-era questions and conflicts.”³¹³ He notes further that “certain aspects of

³¹² *ibid.*, 27.

³¹³ Steven C. Judd, *Religious Scholars and the Umayyads, Piety-minded supporters of the Marwānid caliphate*, (London, New York: Routledge, 2014), 3.

Islamic thought were coalescing and that particular theological and legal topics, such as human free will and caliphal authority, were the focus of significant, increasingly sophisticated, debate”,³¹⁴ though observing that a lack of reliable sources makes it difficult to investigate this formative period.

Whereas the focus of Crone and Hinds is somewhat broader, Judd focuses more closely on the Umayyads, asserting that the Umayyads were regarded as secular while the ʿAbbāsīd were represented as religious.³¹⁵ In fact, early and medieval Muslim historiographers contributed considerably to this secular Umayyad image, a fact which is perhaps not surprising given that their work was completed during ʿAbbāsīd rule. Most notable amongst these was the history of al-Ṭabarī who depicted the Marwānīd rule as imperial. With few exceptions, according to this version, the caliphs wielded little religious influence in Islamic religious doctrinal, legal, and juristic spheres. Modern scholars meanwhile based their work on ʿAbbāsīd era sources particularly on al-Ṭabarī; consequently, the majority of modern scholars tend to view the Umayyad dynasty as a secular institution.

Judd further highlights the suggestion by modern scholars that the systematic formulation of a legal system began during the ʿAbbāsīd period. He comments that modern scholars either neglect or marginalise the Umayyad role in legal development, as for example with Schacht, who values the Umayyad contributions to legal development but argues that their approaches were undermined by the Traditionists.³¹⁶ Similarly, while Wael Hallaq acknowledges the Umayyads’ importance to the development of the Islamic legal system, he nonetheless disregards their arguably crucial role in the formation of such a system, arguing instead that this process was led by a “group of private individuals whose motivation to engage in the study of law was largely a matter of piety.”³¹⁷ Judd criticises such marginalising views, and attempts instead to re-evaluate the role of the Umayyads in the formation of ḥadīth and legal systems, arguing that a substantial community of religious scholars was associated with the Umayyads, a connection that assisted significantly in the

³¹⁴ *ibid.*, 3.

³¹⁵ *ibid.*, 5.

³¹⁶ *ibid.*, 12.

³¹⁷ Wael Hallaq, *The Origins and Evolution of Islamic Law*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 63.

formation of legal practices and theological beliefs.³¹⁸ Crucially, he asserts that “the association of pious, influential scholars with the Umayyads caliphs would undermine the dichotomy of pious opposition versus godless authoritarian rule”,³¹⁹ and documents the details of all pro-Umayyad scholars, who themselves played a vital role in the formation of religion under the dynastic patronage.

Judd also analyses the origins and impact of the third civil war (126/744—130/747), as well as the role of religious factors in the demise of the Umayyad caliphate in his doctoral thesis: *The Third Fitna: Orthodoxy, Heresy and Coercion in Late Umayyad History*. Special consideration is given to the nature of the relationship between the religious scholars and Umayyad rulers. In addition he tries to determine “whether religious disagreements created conflicts between political actors or whether more cynically, religion merely provided an ideological crutch in pure power politics.”³²⁰ According to Judd, religion assumed a critical importance in relation to the Umayyad demise. He views Hishām as a successful ruler who not only asserted his own religious authority as a custodian of religion but also challenged the religious position of groups such as the Khawārij and °Alids. Hishām, like his predecessors °Abd al-Malik and °Umar b. °Abd al-°Azīz, punished many people for their perceived heretical associations; heresy thus became a prevalent trope in the polemics of the various religious sects.³²¹ Nevertheless, his successor could not control the competing religious and political groups, which in turn reorganised themselves to challenge the Umayyads’ religious authority. Consequently, Judd concludes, “the regime’s religious foundation was destroyed as well, raising questions about the nature of the caliphate and its relationship to the development of Islam.”³²² The Khawārij presented their concept of shūra and the Shi‘ī called for their concept of imamah. This was the backdrop against which the Umayyads strove both to uphold their religious authority and to challenge their opponents.³²³

³¹⁸ Judd, *Religious Scholars and the Umayyads*, 13.

³¹⁹ *ibid.*, 6.

³²⁰ Judd, *The Third Fitna*, 3.

³²¹ *ibid.*, 28, 32.

³²² *ibid.*, 4.

³²³ *ibid.*, 43.

Judd's particular focus is the study of religious factors and their influence in the movement that led to the destruction of the Umayyads' Caliphal system. Religion undoubtedly played an important role in the power politics of the period, and as well as constructing religion as a key motivating force in power politics,³²⁴ he analyses the role of the Qadariya in the third fitna and how they influenced Yazīd III and his successors. This view contrasts sharply with that of Dennet who argues that Yazīd III was highly impressed with the Khārījī doctrine and that his political reforms were "almost pure Khārījism".³²⁵

Historical sources record the piety of Yazīd b. al-Walīd and his close association with the Qadariya. Yazīd b. al-Walīd, on the basis of his Qadarī doctrine, challenged the authority and legitimacy of al-Walīd b. Yazīd. In so doing, he rejected the authoritarian tradition of the Umayyads, and instead devised a revolutionary ideology where the ruler was also publicly accountable. This new ideology weakened the authority and powers of the ruler, who was no longer able to impose new taxes on the people. Thus, when Yazīd b. Walīd reduced his subjects' stipends he faced strong criticism from a public who labelled him al-Nāqīṣ, i.e., 'the inadequate' or 'reducer'. Judd rightly notes that Yazīd and his successor Ibrāhīm "attempted to rule while adhering to an ideology which in turn prevented either ruler from actually wielding power over the people." This failure illustrates the inadequacy of the new ideology to support the caliphs' legitimacy and also indicates, as Judd observes, that "piety without coercive power was not sufficient to rule an empire."³²⁶

Yazīd b. al-Walīd successfully used the Qadarī ideology to overthrow al-Walīd b. Yazīd. In doing so, he shattered the foundation of the Umayyads' traditional power institutions. Once the traditional pattern of authority had been challenged all the ambitious members of the Umayyad family attempted to acquire authority, as seen in the struggle of Sulaymān and Marwān b. Muḥammad. Although the latter successfully consolidated his authority, the new ideology was not

³²⁴ Judd, *The Third Fitna*, 3.

³²⁵ Dennett, *Marwān*, 201, 220.

³²⁶ Judd, *The Third Fitna*, 109.

robust enough to sustain it. Thus, the traditional authority of the Umayyads became dysfunctional while their revolutionary authority could not provide them with a strong basis to rule.

Judd considers that the involvement of the Umayyads in religious debates and persecution of heretics indicates their high level of engagement in religious affairs and desire to establish their religious authority,³²⁷ noting that they were consistent in demanding their right to define orthodoxy and heresy.³²⁸ As the above discussion illustrates, the Umayyads were painted as secular in the works of modern scholars before the mid-twentieth century. However, the revisionists of the latter half of the twentieth century, particularly Crone, Hinds, Hakim and Judd reject most of the assertions regarding the putative secularism of the Umayyads. They base their argument on the fact that the secular portrayal of the Umayyads in modern scholarship derives largely from an over-dependence on the work of al-Ṭabarī; whereas the availability of new sources enables more nuanced and holistic exploration and revisiting of the subject. Attempting to reconstruct the Umayyads' role in religious development, their investigations suggest that the Umayyads, rather than secular, were indeed religious, and enjoyed the support of a large number of prominent scholars of that time.

Kennedy also analyses the nature of the Umayyads' religious authority. Crucially, along with other revisionists, he maintains that their decline could also be ideologically explained. He also notes the prevalent view of the time which cast the Umayyads in a broadly secular light, while Crone and Hinds sought to prove the religious authority of the Umayyads on the basis of historical documents. Kennedy, however, argues that the people of Iraq did not accept the religious authority of the Umayyads, but continued to insist on the rule of the Qur'ān and Sunna, having gradually come to believe that only the Family of the Prophet could provide such authority on an Islamic basis.³²⁹ It is perhaps more realistic that the Umayyads were not secular as presented in modern sources but were religious as the revisionists claimed. However, while Umayyad religious

³²⁷*ibid.*, 32.

³²⁸*ibid.*, 40.

³²⁹ Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 116.

authority appears to have been accepted in Iraq and Khurāsān at the start of their rule, at the moment of their decline, this same religious authority was openly challenged and rejected.

4.3 Religion and Religious Movements in Pre-Modern Sources

The role of religion and religious movements, as manifested in pre-Modern sources, is examined to enhance understanding of the ideological factors contributing to the decline and fall of the Umayyads, and to help in assessing the narratives invoked by modern scholars of the Umayyad period. Historiographies of five pre-modern Muslim historians were selected for the study: al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Ṭabarī, al-Masʿūdī, Ibn Athīr and Ibn Khaldūn. Detailed consideration reveals that debates on religion were presented in these chronicles according to the perspectives of the most prominent socio-religious and political movements; i.e., the Hāshimids-ʿAbbāsids, the Khawārij, and the Qadarīya. While acknowledging their socio-political aspects, here the study focuses to a greater degree on analysing their religious role, looking at each of the movements separately.

4.3.1 The Hāshimids-ʿAbbāsids in Pre-Modern Sources

Most of the pre-modern sources that chronicled the Umayyad dynasty were compiled during the period of ʿAbbāsīd rule, which is why modern historiographers usually highlight the hostility of their pre-modern fore-runners towards the Umayyads. The intention here is to explore and assess the ways in which pre-modern historians recorded the events leading to the fall of the Umayyads, to identify their perspectives on the development of the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd movement during the later Umayyad era, and to examine the extent to which these pre-modern sources considered the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd movement to be at the root of that fall. This bias can be observed particularly in the case of the Khurāsān episode and its role in the decline of Arab rule. Emerging in Khurāsān, the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd movement was significantly assisted and supported by non-Arabs. The Hāshimid-Umayyad conflict was historically rooted in their past tribal conflict, echoes of which can be heard in the accounts from pre-modern sources. However, the ʿAbbāsīds gradually established their movement on an ideological basis. Having considered the conflict between the Hāshimids-ʿAbbāsīds and Umayyads from a tribal perspective, it can now be argued that this struggle contributed to the weakening of aṣabīya in the Arab tribes, a situation that then enabled the non-Arabs to assert and extend their own power. Here, however, we examine how the

Hāshimids-°Abbāsids established their movement on a religious basis and how this religiously-grounded institution is recorded in pre-modern sources.

4.3.1.1 Al-Ya°qūbī and the Hāshimids-°Abbāsīd Movement

Al-Ya°qūbī observed Umayyad decline in the rise of the Hāshimid movement in Iraq and Khurāsān following the period of Hishām b. °Abd al-Malik. Nevertheless, Hishām's shrewdness and political wisdom had ensured the Umayyads' temporary survival. Al-Ya°qūbī notes that Hishām b. °Abd al-Malik b. Marwān was a cautious but close-fisted, jealous, unsympathetic and cruel ruler,³³⁰ and clearly believes that the decline of the Umayyads occurred due to the ascendancy of the Hāshimid and Abbasid movements in Iraq and Khurāsān. He records that in 111 AH, Sulaymān b. Kathīr al-Khazā°ī, Bukayr b. Hāmān, and Abū Salma Ḥafṣ b. Sulaymān al-Khallāl initiated and organized a movement to overthrow the Umayyads and bring the Hāshimids to power. Al-Khallāl wrote a letter to Muḥammad b. °Alī b. °Abd Allah asking him for support and guidance. As the movement expanded its network, Khālīd b. °Abd Allah al-Qasrī, governor of Irāq, appointed his brother Asad b. °Abd Allah as his deputy in Khurāsān. The latter suppressed the movement, cutting off the hands and legs of the Hāshimid adherents and hanging many of them. He terrorized the Hāshimid and their supporters until his death in 120 AH.³³¹

Ya°qūbī also recorded that Khālīd al-Qasrī was accused of being closely associated with the donation of a sum of six hundred thousand dirhams to the Hāshimid cause. Hishām investigated the matter with the involvement of Ḥassān al-Nibṭī, who produced evidence of Khālīd's involvement in donating public money to the Hāshimids. This act infuriated Hishām, who condemned Khālīd and dismissed him from his post. Further, Hishām wrote a letter to Yūsuf b. °Umar, governor of Yemen, asking him to control the administrative affairs of Iraq. In 120 AH, Yūsuf detained Khālīd and his deputies imprisoning him and his fellows and punishing them ruthlessly. He tortured many of Khālīd's deputies so harshly that many of them died.³³²

³³⁰ al-Ya°qūbī, *Tārīkh*, 68/3.

³³¹ *ibid.*, 59-60/3.

³³² *ibid.*, 63-64/3.

Al-Yaʿqūbī also records the meeting between Zayd b. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥussayn and Hishām. Hishām questioned Zayd about Yūsuf b. ʿUmar’s letter in which he revealed that Khālīd al-Qasrī had given six hundred thousand dirhams to Zayd, which Zayd denied. Al-Yaʿqūbī’s notes on their talk clearly identify the hostility between Zayd and Hishām. For instance, Hishām reportedly taunted Zayd over his aspiration to the caliphate as follows:

Did you not know that you were the son of a slave woman? Zayd replied: Alas! You are criticizing my family lineage. By God, Ishāq was the son of an independent and autonomous lady (ḥurra) and Ismāʿīl was the son of a slave women. God had chosen Ismāʿīl and Arabs were from his lineage and the Prophet of Allah (Muḥammad) was also one of his descendants.³³³

According to this version of events, Hishām’s policy of challenging the ascendant Hāshimids appears to have prompted him to remove his trustworthy, pro-Hāshimid governor, Khālīd al-Qasrī, who was of Yemenī origin. Hishām ordered Yūsuf b. ʿUmar to probe the matter by listening to the arguments of both Zayd and Khālīd al-Qasrī. Yūsuf duly arranged a meeting between Zayd and Khālīd, and asked Khālīd about the money which he believed had been given to Zayd. Khālīd replied, “by God, he did not give him any money”. Yūsuf then ordered Zayd to leave Kufa immediately by order of the commander of the faithful people, whereupon the Shiʿīs of Kufa gathered around to give him their allegiance. When Yūsuf b. ʿUmar became aware of the situation in 121 AH, he attacked Zayd and killed him.³³⁴

Al-Yaʿqūbī emphasises Zayd’s central role in the initiation of the Shiʿī movement in Khurāsān. The movement’s members publicised the tyranny of the Umayyads as well as their torture of the Prophet’s family, disseminating the news of Zayd’s assassination across Khurāsān. He also narrates Yaḥyā b. Zayd’s flight to Khurāsān and his hiding in Balkh, as well as Yūsuf’s subsequent orders for his arrest. We also learn that Naṣr b. Sayyār captured and imprisoned Yaḥyā b. Zayd in Khurāsān,³³⁵ where, Al-Yaʿqūb informs us, the assassination of Yaḥyā b. Zayd took place, thereby giving further impulse to the Hāshimid movement.

³³³ *ibid.*, 65/3.

³³⁴ *ibid.*, 66/3.

³³⁵ *ibid.*, 66-67/3.

In Al-Yaʿqūbī's view this proved a crucial turning point in the development of the Hāshimid movement, whose leading adherents, such as Sulaymān b. Kathīr, Mālik b. al-Ḥaytham, and Qaḥṭaba b. Shabīb, met Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allah b. ʿAbbās. Al-Yaʿqūbī records that Abū Muslim was also present at the meeting at which Muḥammad b. ʿAlī predicted his own imminent death, nominating Ibrāhīm as his successor. He also advised them to follow Abū Muslim who would establish the rule of the Prophet's family. Muḥammad died at the end of 125 AH.³³⁶ According to al-Yaʿqūbī, the chief grounds for the fall of the Umayyads were understood up to this time to be the rise of the Hāshimid movement and the conflicts within the royal family. Meanwhile, the role of tribal conflict is somewhat marginal in his account. Similarly, al-Yaʿqūbī records that the conflict between Khālīd al-Qasrī and Yūsuf b. ʿUmar was not tribal but was due to Hishām's desire to remove Khālīd from the governorship of Iraq. Yūsuf b. ʿUmar was perhaps a suitable choice to suppress the Hāshimid movement completely, since he had crushed the rebellion and killed Zayd b. ʿAlī and his supporters. Al-Yaʿqūbī portrays the Umayyads as unable to suppress the Hāshimid movement which flourished across Iraq and Khurāsān, and which played a central role in the fall of Umayyad rule.

4.3.1.2 Al-Ṭabarī and the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd Movement

In contrast to al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Ṭabarī illustrates the development of the Hāshimid movement in a more comprehensive historical perspective. He reveals that the ʿAbbāsīd movement started in Khurāsān during Asad's rule, with Ziyād Abū Muḥammad their first preacher in the region. Al-Ṭabarī's account relates that Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allah b. al-ʿAbbās dispatched Ziyād to invite people to their cause, to stay with the Yemenites, and treat Muḍar gently. He also advised Ziyād to stay away from Ghālib, the Hāshimid preacher who was overcome love for the progeny of Fāṭima. Al-Ṭabarī notes that, as Muḥammad b. ʿAlī had predicted, conflict soon emerged between Ziyād Abū Muḥammad and Ghālib, with both preachers criticising the Umayyads and emphasising accounts of their tyranny and oppression. However, while the former adhered to the ʿAbbāsīds, the latter adhered to the Fāṭimīds, prompting dissension between the two groups.³³⁷

³³⁶ *ibid.*, 72/3.

³³⁷ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 126/4.

The Hāshimid movement continued secretly during the next ten years, becoming more visible in 117 AH. In order to control the situation, Hishām dismissed °Aṣim b. °Abd Allah from Khurāsān, attaching that province instead to Iraq, under the governorship of Khālīd b. °Abd Allah al-Qasrī. He further advised Khālīd to appoint Asad b. °Abd Allah al-Qasrī as his deputy in Khurāsān in 117 AH to ensure law and order in the region.³³⁸ Along with other measures taken for the restoration of peace, Asad arrested a group of preachers belonging to the °Abbāsids, killing some and imprisoning others.³³⁹

Khālīd b. °Abd Allah al-Qasrī was governor of Iraq from the accession of Hishām and ruled until 120 AH. A Yemenī, he is considered to have been moderate and enlightened, and to have attempted to maintain a balance between the various hostile social factions; certainly no significant tribal clashes appear to have occurred during his long period of administration. Although tribal hostilities between the Muḍar and Yemen had emerged in Khurāsān during the early period of Hishām, Khālīd, with the active support of Damascus, succeeded in quelling the conflict. However, these tribal disturbances re-appeared with the emergence of other ideological movements in Iraq and Khurāsān, where the Khawārij and the Hāshimids-°Abbāsids both mobilised the followers of their movements. In this situation, Hishām took Khālīd's advice, and deputised his brother Asad al-Qasrī to suppress the unrest in Khurāsān. Asad was able to restore peace in the problematic areas.

Khālīd al-Qasrī administered Iraq judiciously, and is credited with ensuring peace and justice in the region. However, his long rule in Iraq and his policy of tolerance gained him enemies, among whom was Hishām who dismissed him from the governorship. Al-Ṭabarī reports many events that indicate the changes in Hishām's policies while he was governing Iraq and Khurāsān during the last years of his rule. He appointed a Muḍarī as minister in place of a Yemenī and a Rabī'ī. Asad b. °Abd Allah, the deputy governor of Khurāsān died in 120 AH while his brother Khālīd b. °Abd Allah was dismissed from the governorship of Iraq in the same year, contemporaneous with

³³⁸ *ibid.*, 157/4.

³³⁹ *ibid.*, 162/4.

Muḥammad b. ʿAlī's dispatching of Bakayr b. Hāmān to his followers in Khurāsān and the organisation of the ʿAbbāsid preachers and representatives (nuqabāʾ).³⁴⁰

Al-Ṭabarī, like al-Yaʿqūbī, records the same reason for Khālīd's dismissal from the governorship of Iraq, i.e., the accusation of providing financial aid to the Hāshimids. However, al-Ṭabarī considers that Hishām was not convinced of these allegations, even though he still removed him from office in 120 AH. It is likely that he sought to embody a more aggressive policy at this stage, and therefore appointed Yūsuf b. ʿUmar as governor of Iraq. Yūsuf was a Muḍarī who abhorred the Yemenīs, particularly Khālīd b. ʿAbd Allah al-Qasrī. He proceeded to capture and torture the deposed governor with the intention of killing him, but Hishām's orders saved Khālīd's life. Meanwhile, Yūsuf continued to persecute the Hāshimids. He suppressed the uprising of Zayd b. ʿAlī b. Ḥussayn by assassinating him and burning his corpse.³⁴¹

The policy of repression re-invigorated the ʿAbbāsid movement in Khurāsān. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allah b. ʿAbbās, propagandist for the movement, refused to accept Umayyad sovereignty and initiated a movement to install the Hāshimids. He died in 125 AH, having nominated his eldest son Ibrāhīm to continue his movement. Abū Muslim Khurāsānī was a vigorous adherent. Genealogically an Arab, and a native of Iṣfahān, he successfully constructed the ʿAbbāsid propaganda to fit the Hāshimid cause. With the death of Hishām in 125 AH/743 AD, Abū Muslim accelerated this programme in Khurāsān. Meanwhile, following the death of his father, Yaḥyā b. Zayd went underground and started a movement in Khurāsān. He, too, was later hunted down and killed during the rule of al-Walīd b. Yazīd.³⁴²

Yaḥyā's death further galvanized the ʿAbbāsid movement. After the death of Zayd b. ʿAlī and his son Yaḥyā, the supremacy of ʿAbbās's descendants was established and the ʿAbbāsid movement advanced under the slogan "Avenger of the House [of the Prophet]". Al-Ṭabarī gives a detailed elaboration of the conflicts between Yūsuf b. ʿUmar and Khālīd al-Qasrī, and between al-Kirmānī and Naṣr b. Sayyār, as well as commenting on how Yemenī-Muḍarī relations influenced these

³⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 182-183/4.

³⁴¹ *ibid.*, 204-209/4.

³⁴² *ibid.*, 233- 234/4.

conflicts. In his view, the advantage was gained by Abū Muslim Khurāsānī and the ʿAbbāsids, a narrative that is more or less analogous to that of al-Yaʿqūbī, who narrates the dismissal of Khālīd al-Qasrī and the appointment of Yūsuf b. ʿUmar. The administrative change resulted not from tribal conflict between Qays and Muḍar, but from a change in the state policy regarding the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd movement.

4.3.1.3 Al-Masʿūdī and the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd Movement

Al-Masʿūdī, too, records the development of the Hāshimids from a historical perspective, presenting various socio-political and religious dimensions of the movement.³⁴³ He gives a comprehensive account of Zayd b. ʿAlī b. Ḥussayn's death, recording how Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik killed him in 121 or 122 AH, and relating in great detail the conversation between Zayd and Hishām on the issue of khilāfah. He notes that Zayd came to Hishām in Ruṣāfah, sat in a corner of the room and said, "O leader of the believers! No one can be enhanced without God's blessing nor can the status of someone be reduced with it." Hishām replied, "Be silent! You do not have a 'free' mother and you are a son of a slave. I do not know why you have argued that you have a right to the caliphate." To which Zayd responded: "Mothers do not prevent their children from attaining high positions. There was no doubt that the mother of Ismāʿīl was a slave woman. She was a slave of Ishāq's mother. And was not Ismāʿīl a Prophet of Allah and considered to be a father of Arabs, while Muḥammad, the most noble man of all human beings, was born of him?" Zayd rejected Hishām's allegations, claiming that he was a son of Faṭīma b. Muḥammad and ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. Even so, he argued, if someone was a son of a slave woman, this would not degrade his religious position.³⁴⁴ Al-Masʿūdī reports that Zayd left for Kufa in the company of many scholars

³⁴³ Al-Masʿūdī records an interesting conversation between ʿAlī b. ʿAbū Ṭālib and Muʿāwīya b. Sufyān that demonstrates their hostility and conflict. Muʿāwīya wrote in a letter to ʿAlī: "the battle amongst us had reached its climax and it engulfed our soldiers and important people." Muʿāwīya responded: "They were all supporters of ʿAbd Munnāf and nobody among us had any supremacy over others", to which ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, replying, concurred with Muʿāwīya about the destruction caused by the war, though stating his refusal to give him political authority over Syria. Secondly, he argued that Umayya was not like Hāshim; nor was Ḥarb like ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib; nor Abū Sufyān like Abū Ṭālib; nor was the person who was forgiven (*ṭalīq*) "after the conquest of Mecca and the acceptance of Islam" like the one "who migrated to Medina because non-believers of Mecca did not allow him to live there when he accepted Islam". This letter clearly reveals the enmity between the Hāshimids and Umayyads.

³⁴⁴ al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, 407/2.

and nobles, and that Yūsuf b. °Umar al-Thaqfī fought with him. Zayd’s followers were defeated and he was killed in a cruel manner. Yūsuf dispatched his head to Hishām who ordered the naked body to be crucified. Hishām later sent a letter and advised Yūsuf to burn his body.³⁴⁵

Al-Mas°ūdī’s treatment of Islamic history is well-organised and systematic in its presentation. He introduces each Caliph and offers details of significant events in their chronology, and claims that he has recorded brief reports containing important information.³⁴⁶ Tarif Khalidi comments, “in reality, however, the stories recorded are often strong indictments of a particular ruler’s character or deeds. This is especially in evidence in al-Mas°ūdī’s treatment of the Umayyads.”³⁴⁷ Thus, authorial judgments on people and events are arguably implied through the manner of their inclusion and narration within his account.

Indeed, al-Mas°ūdī constructs the Umayyad-Hāshimid conflict as momentous. However he depicts the Hāshimids as comparatively placid and moderate, reporting that they killed the Umayyads ruthlessly but treated their women gently. He describes how Marwān’s daughters were brought to Ṣāliḥ b. °Alī. Marwān’s eldest daughter asked him for forgiveness but Ṣāliḥ reminded her of the violent chronicle of hostilities between the Umayyad and Hāshimid royal families. Her father, Marwān, had killed Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. °Alī b. °Abd Allah b. al-°Abbās in the prison of Harrān; Hishām b. °Abd al-Malik had hanged Zayd b. °Alī b. al-Ḥussayn b. °Alī in Kūfa while his wife was killed in Ḥira by Yūsuf b. °Umar al-Thaqfī; al-Walīd b. Yazīd had killed Yaḥyā b. Zayd and hanged him Khurāsān; °Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād had killed °Aqīl b. °Abī Ṭālib in Kufa; and Yazīd b. Mu°āwīya had killed al-Ḥussayn b. °Alī along with his family. Moreover, the ladies of the Prophet’s family were disgraced and humiliated in front of the Syrians. Al-Mas°ūdī reports that Ṣāliḥ reiterated his enmity towards the Umayyads and then not only forgave her but also offered to marry her and her sister to his sons al-Faḍl and °Abd Allah if they wished, later sending them to Ḥarrān upon their request.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 407-410/2.

³⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 126/2.

³⁴⁷ Tarif Khalidi, *Islamic Historiography: The Histories of Mas°ūdī*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1975), 128.

³⁴⁸ al-Mas°ūdī, *Murūj*, 441-442/2.

It may thus be inferred from al-Masʿūdī's account that he considered the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd movement a critical factor in the fall of the Umayyads. Nonetheless, in relation to the removal of Khālīd al-Qasrī, al-Masʿūdī's reports reinforce the narrative of this event as having been caused not by tribal hostility or a change in the expansionist policy but rather by the fact that it occurred as an attempt to curb the expanding movement of the Hāshimids. Yūsūf b. ʿUmar undertook to crush the Hāshimid's strength by ruthlessly killing Zayd b. ʿAlī and his adherents. Meanwhile Khālīd, being less hostile to the Hāshimids, was blamed by Yūsuf b. ʿUmar for providing financial assistance to the Hāshimids. Al-Masʿūdī's illustration of the late Umayyads reinforces the Hāshimid movement's central role in the collapse of their Umayyad foes.

4.3.1.4 Ibn Athīr and the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd Movement

Ibn Athīr's historiography is both comprehensive and thematically analogous to that of al-Ṭabarī. He also reports that Khālīd served for fifteen years as governor of Iraq and Khurāsān during the period of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik,³⁴⁹ and was accused of assisting Zayd b. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥussayn both financially and morally in his actions against Damascus.³⁵⁰ Because of these allegations Hishām dismissed him from the governorship of Iraq and appointed Yūsūf b. ʿUmar in his place. Yūsuf b. ʿUmar was a Muḍarī who hated Khālīd and his Yemenī fellows. He arrested Khālīd and his family and brutally tortured them, also obtaining authorisation to arrest and torture Khālīd.³⁵¹ Hishām's subsequent investigation of the matter yielded contradictory reports. It was proved that Zayd and Dāwūd b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allah b. ʿAbbās and Muḥammad b. ʿUmar b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbī Ṭālib had gone to see Khālīd b. ʿAbd Allah in Iraq. Khālīd presented them with gifts and they returned to Medina. The deputy of Medina confirmed the story up to this point but both parties denied the accusations regarding financial and moral support. When Zayd was asked about Khālīd's help, he questioned in what capacity and to what extent Khālīd could have helped him and his fellows, having previously and very openly cursed them. Similarly Khālīd denied giving any assistance to Zayd.³⁵²

³⁴⁹ Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 296/4.

³⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 256/4.

³⁵¹ *ibid.*, 256/4.

³⁵² *ibid.*, 256/4.

Khālīd remained in the custody of Yūsuf b. ʿUmar. Hishām did not permit Yūsuf to kill Khālīd and warned him that if Khālīd was killed while in his custody then he himself would kill Yūsuf. Thus, Khālīd remained under arrest in prison for eighteen months, after which time Hishām ordered his release. Ibn Athīr notes that Hishām not only released Khālīd but also condemned Yūsuf b. ʿUmar for accusing Khālīd of financially supporting the Hāshimids. Yūsuf wrote to Hishām, explaining that before receiving Khālīd’s financial aid the Hāshimids had been starving, and that having received this support, they had initiated their movement. Yūsuf further maintained that Khālīd b. ʿAbd Allāh had supported Zayd’s revolt, a claim staunchly denied by Hishām, who vigorously denied this and punished the messenger who had carried the letter from Yūsuf, declaring, “Yūsuf told a lie. And we should not accuse Khālīd of disloyalty.”³⁵³ Khālīd eventually returned to Damascus to reside with his tribe. Ibn Athīr discusses reports detailing Khālīd’s suffering in his captivity. Further, many members of his family in Damascus, having subsequently been taken prisoner by the governor Kalthūm b. ʿAyyād al-Qushayrī. They were accused of looting the Damascene treasury, but after an investigation were exonerated. Hishām personally condemned Kalthūm and ordered him to release Khālīd and his fellow captives. Thus, Khālīd clearly lived in Damascus during Hishām’s rule.

Unlike the earlier historians al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Ṭabarī, and al-Masʿūdī, Ibn Athīr focused on tribal matters, whereas the early historians presented such considerations in the context of other prevailing factors. The Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd movement and the role of the Khurāsān feature consistently as the central narrative in histories written prior to Ibn Athīr. Meanwhile modern scholars, such as Zaydan, consult Ibn Athīr for the interpretation of the Umayyad collapse and the role of tribal conflict in it.

4.3.1.5 Ibn Khaldūn and the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd Movement

Ibn Khaldūn, who offers a consistent narrative of Umayyad history in historical perspective, considers both tribal and religious aspects of the Hāshimid movement when presenting the background to Hāshimid-Umayyad relations, and identifies ʿAbd Munāf’s family as the most noble and supreme in the Quraysh due to its size. Both Umayya and Hāshim were sons of ʿAbd Munāf;

³⁵³ *ibid.*, 296/4.

however, the older son was superior to the younger due to the older one's affiliation to a larger group, since in the tribal system the prominence and supremacy of a tribe depends on its greater size. The authority of the Umayyads had been consolidated in pre-Islamic history when Ḥarb b. Umayya had led the battle of Fijjār.³⁵⁴

Ibn Khaldūn presents the people of this time as having been significantly and radically influenced by Islam. With its coming, he argues, they forgot tribal vanities, instead affirming the equality of human beings irrespective of their tribal and ethnic divisions or identity. Ibn Khaldūn cites the event of the valley of Abū Ṭālib, where the Hāshimids were compelled to take refuge. This was a social boycott between the Quraysh and the Hāshimids and of great significance, not least for its reported potential to generate considerable inter-tribal hostility. However, influenced by Islam, pre-Islamic tribal preoccupations were cast aside, being weakened still further during the migration to Medina and the beginning of the jihād. Nonetheless, it was impossible to eradicate a residual tribal sentiment completely, nor indeed was it prohibited in Islam; rather it was invoked as recommended and even beneficial to jihād.³⁵⁵

Ibn Khaldūn emphasises Umayyad supremacy in pre-Islamic Mecca. The Umayyads had consolidated their power particularly after the death of Abū Ṭālib and the migration of the Hashimids to Medina in the company of the Prophet. Now in Mecca, they attained exclusive authority without any competition. The leadership of the Umayyads came to Abū Sufyān after the battle of Badr where all prominent leaders of the Umayyad house were killed.³⁵⁶ Abū Sufyān led the Umayyads in all subsequent battles such as Uḥd, Iḥzāb, and other conflicts. After the conquest of Mecca, the Umayyads accepted Islam. Abū Bakr utilized their strength in the wars of apostasy, while ʿUmar deployed them against the Roman forces in Syria and on the Roman frontiers. He appointed Yazīd b. Abī Sufyān as governor of Syria and his brother, Muʿāwīya b. Abī Sufyān replaced him after his death in the year 18 AH. Muʿāwīya continued in the role as governor of Syria during ʿUthmān's rule. During this period, according to Ibn Khaldūn, the Umayyads' pre-Islamic authority joined together with the existing Muslim authority, while the the Hāshimid

³⁵⁴ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*, 5/3.

³⁵⁵ *ibid.*, 6/3.

³⁵⁶ ʿUtbba, Rabīʿa, al-Walīd, ʿUqba b. Abī Muʿīṭ, and others. Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*, 6/3.

remained busy in prayer and religious affairs because of their close relation to the Prophet. Consequently, political authority fell into Umayyad hands.

Ibn Khaldūn states that on the basis of this authority, and after the assassination of ʿUthmān, Muʿāwīya refused to accept ʿAlī as caliph. ʿAlī gathered the support of all the tribes of Rabīʿa, Yemen, and others while Muʿawīya had the support of the Syrian army and some prominent members of Quraysh who had been previously deployed on the frontiers during the early period of conquest. Muʿawīya sustained his authority with the support of his allies, who were strongly affiliated with tribalism, before successfully defeating a section of ʿAlī's force. Conflict between the Khawārij and ʿAlid forces resulted. Ultimately, Muʿawīya wielded absolute authority in the Muslim caliphate when al-Ḥasan withdrew in his favour in 41 AH. Ibn Khaldūn presents this as a time when people forgot the message of prophecy and returned to power struggles on the basis of ʿasabīya. Furthermore, the domination of the Umayyads over Muḍar and all the Arab tribes was established under the leadership of Muʿawīya.³⁵⁷

Ibn Khaldūn also emphasizes Muʿawīya's remarkable quality of ḥilm (gentleness, forbearance and understanding), which afforded him wisdom in financial matters and forbearance in adversity, in order to achieve his political gains. He therefore spent money lavishly in order to win the confidence of the Fāṭimids, Hāshimids, Zubayrids and other powerful tribes, thereby successfully consolidating Umayyad authority.³⁵⁸

Ibn Khaldūn also documents al-Ṭabarī's authority, describing the important political steps suggested by Muʿawīya for Yazīd. The main points in the policy statement were: (i) to treat the people of Ḥijāz gently and respect them as family or clan members; (ii) to change the governor of Iraq according to the people's demands, even if they demanded a daily change; (iii) to rely on the people of Syria who constituted the real power base, while postponing their deployment for as long as possible, repatriating them immediately in the event of their unavoidable active service, which had in any case to be for as short a period as possible; and (iv) to beware of three people:

³⁵⁷ *ibid.*, 6-7/3.

³⁵⁸ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*, 7/3; Shaban argues that Muʿawīya's quality of ḥilm played a remarkable role in his management and policy decisions. cf. M. A. Shaban, *The Abbasid Revolution*, 144.

(a) ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar, who was understood to be immersed in performing religious and devotional rituals but who, in the absence of any other contender for the caliphate, was to swear allegiance to Yazīd; (b) Ḥussayn b. ʿAlī, who was to be treated gently, forgiven and not put to death; and (c) ʿAbd Allāh b. Zubayr, who was not to be spared if he came into conflict with Yazīd.³⁵⁹ However, Yazīd ignored Muʿāwīya’s advice, choosing instead to follow that of Marwān b. al-Ḥakam.

Al-Walīd b. ʿUtba b. Abī Sufyān was the ʿāmil of Medina when Muʿāwīya died. He received the message from Damascus that Yazīd had taken the caliph’s oath and that he was to arrange to take the oath of allegiance for Yazīd from ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar, Ḥussayn b. ʿAlī, and ʿAbd Allāh b. Zubayr. Al-Walīd consulted Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, who was in Medina at that time. Marwān suggested that they should be invited to take the oath of allegiance to Yazīd, and if they did not agree then they should be killed. Al-Walīd disagreed with Marwān’s suggestion and when Yazīd came to know al-Walīd’s response, he dismissed him and appointed ʿAmr b. Saʿīd al-Ashdaq as ʿāmil of Medina.³⁶⁰

Ibn Khaldūn depicts the Marwānid branch of the Umayyads as successfully establishing their authority by utilising their family ties and blood relationships. Many of their relatives were appointed to high positions in order to integrate them into the power structure and share authority among all members of the royal family. Their supremacy was further established through maintaining strong ties with the Syrian Kalb tribes and harmonising the balance of power between the Yemen and Muḍar in the rest of the state. The ʿaṣabiya became weak during the later Umayyad period and tribal conflict emerged. Ibn Khaldūn records the prominence of the conflict between the Muḍar and Yemen, which became stronger and more evident, and in addition, many ideologically-oriented movements emerged, capitalizing on the tribal hostilities to organise their movements more actively.

³⁵⁹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*, 21- 22/3. In another report, Muhammad b. Abī Bakr is also included in the list of people rewarded by Muʿāwīya . Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*, 21/3.

³⁶⁰ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*, 22- 23/3.

Yūsuf b. ʿUmar accused Khālīd al-Qasrī of giving financial support to Zayd b. ʿAlī in Kufa. It was proved that Zayd, in the company of Muḥammad b. ʿUmar b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbī Ṭālib and Dāwūd b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allah b. ʿAbbās, had come to Khālīd in Iraq who presented them with gifts before they returned to Medina. On Hishām's investigation, they confessed to accepting the gifts but denied any other wrongdoing. Zayd hid himself in Kufa, initiating a secret mission calling the people to take the oath of allegiance to him in Kufa; approximately fifteen thousand people followed his call. Yūsuf b. ʿUmar subsequently attacked Zayd and after a furious fight Zayd was killed on the orders of Hishām. Later, when al-Walīd became caliph, he demanded the burning of Zayd's corpse,³⁶¹ an act which angered the people of Khurāsān who were already expressing rebellion against the central authority of the Umayyads. Naṣr, the Umayyad governor, failed to be reconciled with al-Kirmānī and Shaybān. Meanwhile Abū Muslim successfully gathered strength in order to establish his authority in Khurāsān, which he then extended and consolidated in Iraq; this in turn led to the ascendancy of the ʿAbbāsids.

4.3.2 Concluding Note

The detailed elaboration of the pre-modern historical sources on the role of the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd movement presented above provides an excellent basis for examining the views of the early historians. Al-Yaʿqūbī's emphasis on the decisive role of the Hāshimid and ʿAbbāsīd movements in the Umayyads' decline contrasts, for example, with Al-Ṭabarī's broad explanation of Umayyad rule and the identification of several elements leading to their fall. In al-Ṭabarī's view, tribal rivalries did play a role but were not considered the most important factor. For al-Ṭabarī the Khurāsānian factor is of key significance in the weakening of this caliphate, a view closely mirrored in accounts offered by both al-Masʿūdī and Ibn Athīr. However, on the issue of ʿaṣabīya, Ibn Athīr's elaboration appears the most all-inclusive and comprehensive.

Ibn Khaldūn gives adequate space to the development of the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd movement that contributed to the Marwānīd demise. Viewing ʿAbbāsīd success in bringing an end to the absolute domination of the Arabs, he argues that unity of Arab ʿaṣabīya was fundamental to establishing the rule of Islam under one state (dawla) from the period of the earliest four caliphs to the end of

³⁶¹ *ibid.*, 101-103/3.

Umayyad rule. Then, as he suggests, with the fragility of the Arab^ʿaṣabīya, non-Arab Shi^ʿīs appeared, demanding the caliphate for the people of the Prophetic House (ahl al-bayt). The Shi^ʿī movement ultimately brought the ʿAbbāsids to power, but the ʿAbbāsids were unable to maintain the unity of the Arab state because Andalusia remained under Umayyad control, having been established by the latter as an intended parallel to Baghdād. Thus, the unity of the Arab caliphate had gone and the division led them to the foundation of two separate states under the rule of Islam.

Ibn Khaldūn argues further that the division of the Muslim states was based on the division of the Arab ʿaṣabīya, a division that intensified further with the weakening of the ʿAbbasid state. Shi^ʿī movements emerged across the Muslim lands, including the Idrīsīs in the Maghreb al-Aqṣā (Morocco), and the Ubaydiyyīn in Qayrāwān and Egypt, the Qarāmiṭa in Baḥrayn, together with other Shi^ʿī movements in Ṭibristān and Daylam, while the Aṭrūsh succeeded in establishing their separate states. Thus, the unity of the rule of Islam was ended and many separate states came to existence.³⁶²

The earlier discussion demonstrates Ibn Khaldūn's privileging of the ʿaṣabīya and tribal conflict as key forces leading to the disintegration of the Umayyad caliphate. Moreover both he and Ibn Athīr give more consideration to the role of the ʿaṣabīya in the same dynastic decline, whereas the Hāshimid movement and the Khurāsānian factor feature more prominently as the supposed contributory causes according to the historiographies of al-Ya^ʿqūbī, al-Ṭabarī and al-Mas^ʿūdī.

4.4 Pre-Modern Historiographers on the Role of the Khawārij

Pre-modern sources provide substantial information on religio-political movements. Having already discussed the early development of the Khawārij in historical perspective, the study considers the Khawārij role during the last eight years of Umayyad rule. The Khawārij tradition is consistently recorded but not considered in great detail in the pre-modern and modern sources. In contrast to the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd movement, the Khawārij movement failed to achieve its objectives. Pre-modern historiographers, too, appear less than flattering towards the Khawārij. This section seeks to identify ways in which the Khawārij and their role were depicted in the pre-

³⁶² *ibid.*, 176/3.

modern sources, as well as to discover the reasons cited in these sources for the eventual failure of this group.

4.4.1 Al-Ya'qūbī and the Khawārij Movement

Presenting the historical status of the Khawārij, al-Ya'qūbī noted that the Khawārij and Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik had, by the end of his rule, signed an agreement for peace. Bahlūl b. 'Umar al-Shaybānī, along with his followers, took the oath of allegiance to Hishām, and that agreement provided a strong sense of mutual trust between Hishām and Bahlūl.³⁶³ The agreement remained intact until Hishām's death, after which Bahlūl rebelled against the Umayyads.³⁶⁴ With this brief overview, al-Ya'qūbī convincingly demonstrates the acknowledged role of the Khawārij during the later Umayyad era, since his work points to a Khawārij reorganisation when they had ascertained the weakness in the Umayyad administration after Hishām's death. During the period of al-Walīd and Yazīd they gradually gathered strength, with their power becoming more evident following the arrival of Marwān b. Muḥammad, when all the anti-Marwān forces gathered under the Khawārij umbrella. Al-Ya'qūbī recorded that al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qays al-Ḥarūrī took control of the Iraqī peripheries, battling against 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, whom he defeated, before heading towards Mūṣil and encircling Naṣībayn which was under the control of 'Abd Allah b. Marwān b. Muḥammad. Al-Ḍaḥḥāk also appointed Musāfir as governor of Armenia, where the Umayyad deputy ('amil), 'Aṣīm b. 'Abd Allah b. Yazīd al-Hilālī, was killed by the Armenians. Observing the deteriorating situation, Marwān b. Muḥammad planned to thwart the increasing power of the Khawārij, and after heavy fighting on both sides, al-Ḍaḥḥāk was killed in 127 AH.

Al-Ya'qūbī argues that after al-Ḍaḥḥāk's death the Khawārij lost their strength and split into various factions. However, they became stronger when Sulaymān b. Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik joined them after he had been defeated while en route to Syria, by Marwān b. Muḥammad, at

³⁶³ Al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, 63/3.

³⁶⁴ There are some contradictory reports in the history of al-Ya'qūbī. He recorded that Bahlūl rebelled after the death of Hishām, and Khālīd b. 'Abd Allah, Governor of Iraq, chased and killed him in Mūṣil. In the next paragraph, al-Ya'qūbī notes that Hishām had dismissed Khālīd b. 'Abd Allah and appointed Yūsuf b. 'Umar in his place. The contradiction is therefore evident; i.e., how could Khālīd b. 'Abd Allah kill Bahlūl after the death of Hishām when he was living in Syria following his dismissal from the services? Al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, 63/3.

Khassāf. The alliance between Sulaymān b. Hishām and al-Khaybarī, the Khawārij leader, emerged as a great force against Marwān, Sulaymān having accepted the leadership of al-Khaybarī. Al-Yaʿqūbī records in his historical account that Marwān then crushed the strength of the alliance between the Khawārij and Sulaymān with a series of battles between Marwān and the Khawārij.

According to this version, Marwān's commander ʿĀmir b. Ḍubārah al-Murrī eliminated the influence of the Khawārij, while all the key leaders of the alliance were either killed or fled to far-flung areas. Al-Yaʿqūbī appears not to have considered the role of the Khawārij in contributing directly to the collapse of Umayyad rule. Marwān successfully stabilised the situation and eliminated the strength of Khawārij and the rival princes. Close textual examination of al-Yaʿqūbī's history suggests that the conflict between Naṣr b. Sayyār and Kirmānī weakened the crumbling state. However, the repercussions of that deteriorating situation, and the consequences of Abū Muslim Khurāsānī's increasing force could not have been envisaged by Marwān while still engaged in fighting with the Khawārij.

4.4.2 Al-Ṭabarī and the Khawārij Movement

In contrast to al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Ṭabarī's historiography presents a consistent narrative of the Umayyad period. Later historians based their works on al-Ṭabarī's historiography, and while it is not possible to note all the events he recorded, the study tries to identify and analyse the most significant turning-points recorded in his work. Al-Ṭabarī notes how the political activities of the Khawārij expanded in the provinces of Iraq, al-Jazīra and Azerbaijan after the murder of al-Walīd II.³⁶⁵ Around two hundred warriors gathered under the leadership of Bahdal al-Shaybānī and declared war against Umayyad rule in Kafartuth, a city approximately fifty miles away in the north of Naṣībāyn. Another Khārijī group of thirty warriors was organised under the guidance of Bisṭām al-Shaybānī in Azerbaijan, where they killed the governor (wālī) of Azerbaijan before marching towards Muṣil where they killed eighty civilians in the marketplace. Many members of the Rabiʿa

³⁶⁵ Shaban has a different view regarding the Khawārij movements. He argues that during that period they were not actually based on the early movements of the Khawārij, which were basically tribal movements that linked themselves to the Khawārij for the sake of common interest and mutual political benefits. Thus, the movements of the new Khawārij are not mentioned by the early scholars. Shaban, *Islamic History*, 72.

tribe joined the group, marching to Madā'in and killing its deputy (wālī). Both the Khawārij groups confronted each other and conflict ensued, lasting from the summer of 744 CE until the spring of 745 CE when Bistām was killed, along with many of his followers. Meanwhile Bahdal had died of plague. Thus, all the Khawārij accepted the charismatic leadership of al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qays al-Khārijī, with large numbers of people gathering to receive him with an unprecedented fervour and enthusiasm.

This version shows the Khawārij benefiting from the internal conflict between members of the royal family and tribal conflict within the army. The Khawārij organised themselves under the leadership of al-Ḍaḥḥāk in order to take advantage of internal instability and attack Kufa. In this context, both ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar and al-Naẓr, governor of Marwān, agreed to cease hostilities until the Khawārij movement should decline. However, their alliance was based more on convenience than on mutual trust and understanding, and as a result they faced unexpected defeats by the Khawārij. Naẓr had to leave Kūfa in 745 CE and met ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar in Wāsiṭ to devise a strategy against al-Ḍaḥḥāk. Together they made several unsuccessful attempts to evacuate Kūfa from the Khawārij from Ramaḍān to Shawwāl 745 CE. Marwān II was engaged in pressing the rebellions in Hims and was not in a position to support Naẓr against the Khawārij. A significant shift can thus be observed in Marwān's policy on Iraq. Given that he asked Naẓr to leave Iraq for Jazīra with all his Muḍarī adherents, there was only ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar with his Yemenī army left in Iraq to fight against the Khawārij. ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar assessed the strength of his army and finally in 745 CE accepted the authority of al-Ḍaḥḥāk, who welcomed him and restored his authority as governor of Iraq.³⁶⁶

The above was a political strategy devised by Maṣṣūr b. Jamhūr who had advised Ibn ʿUmar to accept the Khawārij authority in order to engineer an opportunity to confront Marwān b. Muḥammad. Maṣṣūr asserted that if the Khawārij succeeded against Marwān b. Muḥammad, then Ibn ʿUmar would be in a safe position under the Khawārij; on the other hand if they were defeated by Marwān, then Ibn ʿUmar would at least have secured some time to prepare against Marwān. In either case, Ibn ʿUmar was to accept the authority of the Khawārij. Ibn ʿUmar did secure his

³⁶⁶ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 289-290/4.

position under the Khawārij, a tactical move which proved detrimental to the image of Umayyad supremacy and authority, and which fractured further when Sulaymān b. Hishām joined Ibn ʿUmar and took the oath of allegiance to al-Ḍaḥḥāk in 745 CE after his defeat by Marwān II in Ḥimṣ. The strength of the Khawārij meanwhile was emerging as multifaceted.

This version recounts how Marwān observed the situation and devised a policy to demonstrate his determination against the Khawārij. He participated personally in many battles against them and finally succeeded in killing al-Ḍaḥḥāk in the battle of Naṣībayn. Marwān's son ʿAbd Allah, his governor of Irāq, Ibn Hubayra, and his commander ʿĀmir b. Ḍubārah, also played a vital role against the Khawārij. After the death of al-Ḍaḥḥāk, the Khawārij selected al-Khaybarī as the new leader but his leadership was not sustainable. The Khawārij then appointed Shaybān b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Yashkurī as their leader; and he prepared the Khawārij for battle in alliance with Sulaymān b. Hishām but was defeated. Both al-Yashkurī and Sulaymān fled towards Iṣṭakhar in Persia and accepted the authority of ʿAbd Allah b. Muʿāwīya. On the other hand, Marwān also defeated Ibn ʿUmar, imprisoning him in Ḥarrān, whereas Maṣṣūr b. Jamhūr escaped to Persia where he met ʿAbd Allah b. Muʿāwīya. Thus, most of Marwān's opponents gathered around ʿAbd Allah b. Muʿāwīya, who was perceived as being the most powerful leader against Marwān II. All anti-Marwān forces such as the Khawārij, the Yemenīs, the Shiʿīs, and members of the Umayyad family agreed to put aside their personal differences and unite against Marwān.

Al-Ṭabarī records in detail how Marwān's commander crushed the strength of this alliance, and how Shaybān fled to Sijistān while Maṣṣūr b. Jamhūr and Sulaymān b. Hishām fled to India and ʿAbd Allah b. Muʿāwīya took political refuge with Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī. He went to Hirāt but was later killed by Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī.³⁶⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, as has been shown, considers the tribal conflict, particularly between Naṣr and al-Kirmānī in Khurāsān, to be a key cause of Umayyad decline.³⁶⁸ Indeed, this conflict created a vacuum which the ʿAbbāsīd movement was able to occupy and thereby expand its strength.³⁶⁹ Although the Khawārij were unable to achieve their

³⁶⁷ *ibid.*, 305/4.

³⁶⁸ *ibid.*, 265-269/4.

³⁶⁹ *ibid.*, 307/10.

ultimate objectives, they nevertheless succeeding in diverting Marwān's attention from the affairs of Khurāsān, which in turn both weakened and fragmented his power.

4.4.3 Al-Mas'ūdī and the Khawārij Movement

Al-Mas'ūdī's historiography appears generally unsympathetic towards the Umayyads.³⁷⁰ He was both critical of Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik for his parsimony and jealousy, revealing many stories of Hishām's cruelty,³⁷¹ as well as admiring of his political prudence. He cites al-Haytham b. 'Adī and al-Madā'inī's views on leading Umayyad politicians who valued the prudence and good character of three great politicians among the Umayyads: Mu'āwīya, 'Abd al-Malik and Hishām. Al-Mas'ūdī recorded that Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr adopted Hishām's governmental model to resolve the state's internal affairs. Al-Mas'ūdī also gathered a great amount of information regarding Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik's life,³⁷² all of which suggests that Hishām was highly skilled in diplomacy. However, al-Mas'ūdī did not record Hishām's religious ideas and policies, perhaps indicating his own view that such elements held less significance during this rule.

Al-Mas'ūdī notes Marwān II's successful defeat of the Khawārij, during which he killed Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qays al-Ḥarūrī and other Khawarijī leaders such as al-Hirrī and Shaybān al-Shaybānī and Abū Hamzā, achieving this feat despite the Khawārij's relative strength after Sulaymān b. Hishām had joined them. Similarly, Marwān killed his other enemies including Na'im b. Thābit al-Jazāmī. Al-Mas'ūdī celebrates Marwān's quelling of all uprisings,³⁷³ while his presentation of the Khawārij seems almost analogous with that of al-Ṭabarī. Al-Mas'ūdī's historiography portrays the Khawārij as a relatively insignificant cause in the fall of the Umayyads, although, like al-Ṭabarī, he depicts the role of Khurāsān and the 'Abbāsīd movement as the real causes of their decline.

³⁷⁰ According to Mas'ūdī's presentation of Umayyad rule, this was not based on legitimate grounds. He used the word *khalīfa* only for Mu'āwīya b. Abī Sufyān and 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, referring to the remaining Umayyad reigns as "*mulk* (kingdom) or *ayyām* (days) instead of *khilāfah*. This suggests that al-Mas'ūdī rejects their claim of legitimate authority. Al-Ya'qūbī likewise refers to the reigns of the Umayyads as 'days' and used the verb 'to reign' (*malaka*) in regard to their rule." C.f. Khalidī, *Islamic Historiography*, f. n., 129.

³⁷¹ al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, 259-260/3.

³⁷² *ibid.*, 261/3.

³⁷³ *ibid.*, 295/3.

4.4.4 Ibn Athīr and the Khawārij Movement

Many medieval historians based their work on al-Ṭabarī's monumental history, including Ibn Athīr who similarly paints a less than flattering picture of al-Walīd II. Portraying him as a heretic involved in anti-religious acts, Ibn Athīr argues that Yazīd b. al-Walīd enjoyed greater popularity because of his perceived religious appearance.³⁷⁴ Ibn Athīr also provides information regarding the Khawārij but notes that Marwān b. Muḥammad suppressed their rebellions which in turn seems to indicate that he ascribes a marginal role to the Khawārij with regard to Umayyad decline. Indeed, in Ibn Athīr's view, the Khawārij acquired importance only because of the conflict between other competing forces.

4.4.5 Ibn Khaldūn and the Khawārij Movement

Ibn Khaldūn attempted to compile his historiography in the light of the principles set out in his famous prolegomena of history. Specifically, he explained events in the light of his theory of *ʿaṣabiya*, and like earlier Muslim historiographers, also focused to a greater degree on the socio-political events of the Khurāsān and the role of tribalism in Umayyad decline. Ibn Khaldūn recorded the role of Khawārij with significant elaboration in a historical context, documenting their religious and political thinking and movements from the time of their emergence, during the rule of ʿAlī b. Abū Ṭālib, the fourth caliph of Islam, until the fall of the Umayyad caliphate and the early ʿAbbāsīd era.³⁷⁵ His depiction of the Khawārij and their unswerving rebellions against the Umayyad rulers bolsters their image as key influencers of Muslim religious and political culture. Yet he also considers this group as a secondary factor in both the fall of the Umayyads and the rise of the ʿAbbāsīds.

³⁷⁴ Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 322/4.

³⁷⁵ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-Ibar*, 147-176/3.

4.4.6 Summary Note

The sources considered illustrate the role of the Khawārij in the fall of the Umayyads, displaying remarkable similarity across all five pre-modern accounts. All portray the Khawārij as reorganising themselves to establish their political power during the last eight years of Umayyad rule, particularly after the death of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik. They gained a central position when they successfully gathered the support of all the forces that had been against Marwān b. Muḥammad, and when ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar accepted their authority. Thus, the Khawārij, as recorded in the sources, emerged as a dominant power in Iraq and other parts of the Umayyad caliphate. The sources also record their strict organisation and brutal behaviour, key to their formidable strength. Marwān b. Muḥammad's exceptional ability to crush the Khawārij is consistently noted, as is his successful elimination of this group. Nevertheless, they also all agree on a certain degree of Khawārij importance in the fall of the Umayyads, in that Marwān b. Muḥammad, remaining engaged in fighting with the Khawārij, could not take proper measures to stop the development of the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd movement in Khurāsān. Thus, the Khawārij may be considered a remote yet confirmed factor in Umayyad decline as narrated by pre-Modern sources. The sources also agree that the Khawārij could not sustain themselves due to weak ideology, poor reception among the masses and insurmountable internal conflicts.

4.5 The Qadarīya in Pre-Modern Sources

This section assesses the role of the Qadarīya in the light of pre-modern sources, specifically the manner in which the Qadarīya emerged in a historical perspective and the nature of their contribution to the fall of Umayyad rule. It also attempts to discover whether the Qadarīya was an intellectual religious fraternity or a socio-political movement, and further evaluates the last eight years of the Umayyad rule. In examining the movement's ideology, organisation and strategy, the study considers its development and role in the fall of the Umayyads as recorded in pre-modern chronicles.

4.5.1 Al-Ya[°]qūbī and the Qadarīya Movement

Ya[°]qūbī does not provide extensive information about the religious ideas of the later Umayyad rulers except for commenting on al-Walīd b. Yazīd's lack of piety. Al-Walīd b. Yazīd, the reader is told, immersed himself in heretical and unethical matters as well as prohibited behaviour. Cursory reference is also made to Yazīd b. al-Walīd's Qadarī identity, indicating its possible significance:³⁷⁶ however Yazīd b. al-Walīd's religious beliefs are not mentioned in detail by Al-Ya[°]qūbī, who draws no correlation between this ruler's spiritual views (or lack thereof) and political reforms that were implemented. Moreover, al-Ya[°]qūbī's account has no record of Ibrāhīm b. Walīd's religious beliefs either, all of which suggests that in his opinion the Qadarī-derived views of Yazīd and Ibrāhīm were of negligible importance. Also noteworthy is the fact that al-Ya[°]qūbī did not record the religious views of Marwān b. Muhammad, which in turn suggests al-Ya[°]qūbī's own unwillingness to recognise the Qadarīs as having played any major role in the disintegration of an empire.

4.5.2 Al-Ṭabarī and the Qadarīya Movement

Unlike al-Ya[°]qūbī, al-Ṭabarī provides a detailed elaboration of the Qadarīya. He describes how the unity of the Marwānids disintegrated after the murder of al-Walīd b. Yazīd, and the consequent conflict that occurred.³⁷⁷ Al-Ṭabarī records al-Walīd b. Yazīd's nonchalant approach to the role of religion in his life, and how this attitude continued even after he had become a caliph, since he persisted with his drinking and heretical activities, dismaying both the public and the army with his behaviour.³⁷⁸ Al-Ṭabarī sheds light on many reports, through which it can be inferred that people were not happy with al-Walīd's religious practices; whereas, Yazīd b. al-Walīd was famous because of his religiosity.

Al-Ṭabarī records Yazīd b. al-Walīd's first caliphal speech in which he eulogised the Qadarī ideology, asserting that: "there is no obedience of the created in case of disobedience of the

³⁷⁶ al-Ya[°]qūbī, *Tārīkh*, 540/2.

³⁷⁷ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 252/4.

³⁷⁸ *ibid.*, 235/4.

Creator.” (lā ʿata li-makhlūq fī maʿšīyah al-khāliq).³⁷⁹ This sentence clearly shows Yazīd’s allegiance to the Qadarī doctrine. Similarly, al-Ṭabarī notes Yazīd b. al-Walīd’s appointment of a governor associated with Qadarī doctrine, namely Maṣṣūr b. Jamhūr, who replaced Yūsuf b. ʿUmar in Iraq.³⁸⁰ He also documents the letter sent to Iraq by Yazīd b. al-Walīd which contains several references to Qadarī ideas,³⁸¹ and reveals many reports to illustrate the heresies of al-Walīd and the piety of al-Yazīd. On the basis of his exposition, it can be concluded that al-Ṭabarī views the role of the Qadarīya as an important factor only as it relates to the episode of Yazīd b. al-Walīd and not in relation to the decline of the Umayyads.

4.5.3 Al-Masʿūdī and the Qadarīya Movement

Al-Walīd came to power after the death of Hishām. Al-Masʿūdī’s portrayal of Hishām’s successor is negative to the point of vilification. The reader learns that Walīd II had frivolous elements to his character since he drank constantly and kept the company of singing girls. A lover of poetry, and himself a poet, he was always accompanied by other poets, singers and story tellers. His preferred poetic genre was apparently heretical in content, and Masʿūdī reports, on the authority of Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mūsli and Ibrāhīm b. Mahdī, that al-Walīd was the most immoral of all Umayyad rulers. Al-Masʿūdī derives most of his information, particularly with regard to Walīd’s poetry, from al-Mubarrad who, perhaps not surprisingly, is famed for his enmity towards the Umayyads.

In al-Masʿūdī’s view, the period of Yazīd b. al-Walīd and his brother Ibrāhīm was insignificant, given their brief rule which lasted for only nine months. Al-Masʿūdī describes this period as being an absence of the rule of law. He also depicts Yazīd b. al-Walīd as an adherent of Muʿtazalī thought, illustrating the basic principles of the Muʿtazila and presenting Yazīd b. al-Walīd as impressed by these ideas. Furthermore, he records that the Muʿtazila of Damascus having spoken against al-Walīd II and his heresies, refused to accept his authority because of his evident transgressions and expelled him from rule,³⁸² which suggests that Masʿūdī viewed Muʿtazilī’s beliefs as playing a significant role during the period of Yazīd and Ibrāhīm. In addition, he asserts

³⁷⁹ *ibid.*, 256/4.

³⁸⁰ *ibid.*, 257/4.

³⁸¹ *ibid.*, 259/4.

³⁸² al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, 276/3.

that the Mu^ctazila gave Yazīd b. al-Walīd preference over ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz.³⁸³ Thus, in al-Masʿūdī's opinion, the role of the Qadariya was central to the success of the rebellion by Yazīd III which brought the latter to power after the killing of al-Walīd II.

Qadariya religious thought is also linked in this narrative to the overthrow of al-Walīd II, while the decline of Marwān is shown not as a consequence of Mu^ctazilī confrontation, but rather as the result of Marwān's documented predisposition towards Qadarī thinking. Indeed, even al-Masʿūdī gave him the title of Jaʿdī because of his close association with the well-known Qadarī scholar Jaʿd b. Dirham.³⁸⁴

4.5.4 Ibn Athīr and the Qadariya Movement

The narrative and presentation of Ibn Athīr is analogous with that presented by al-Ṭabarī. Ibn Athīr's appraisal of al-Walīd II is negative in the extreme and states that he was killed because of the strong reactions provoked by his indulgence and immoral lifestyle. As a consequence of such habits, and despite having significantly increased the stipends of the army and government servants, al-Walīd II failed to win over his subjects since the people and the army alike regarded his behaviour as abhorrent.

Ibn Athīr also records al-Walīd's family connections as far from exemplary, describing how many of his relatives were persecuted without significant reason, which in his opinion was a fatal mistake, and states, in addition, that Yazīd b. al-Walīd was particularly furious with al-Walīd II, and that people favoured him more because of his religious appearance and faithfulness. According to this assessment, the role of the Qadariya was insignificant, and while he briefly mentions Yazīd's Qadarī status in his biography of Yazīd b. al-Walīd,³⁸⁵ his omission of any details of his Qadarī-derived views appears to indicate their negligible influence on the socio-political life of that period.

Ibn Athīr details the case of Khālīd b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Qasrī who was living peacefully in Damascus and was not politically involved when Hishām died. When al-Walīd came to power, Khālīd

³⁸³ *ibid.*, 272-277/3.

³⁸⁴ *ibid.*, 293/3 .

³⁸⁵ Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 322/4.

accepted his authority, but refused to accept the appointment of the less wordly-wise sons of al-Walīd II as his successors. Infuriated by this attitude, al-Walīd handed him over to Yūsuf who killed him. Ibn Athīr claims this action fatally influenced the course of Umayyad rule. When tribal conflict ensued between the Yemen and Muḍar, the former, despite their earlier resentment, extended their support to Yazīd b. al-Walīd, having been somewhat mollified by Khālīd who had stopped them from rebelling against al-Walīd b. Yazīd. Al-ʿAbbās b. al-Walīd had also warned Yazīd III about a conspiracy against al-Walīd II.³⁸⁶ However, on Khālīd's death the Yemen vowed allegiance to Yazīd III who refused to accept any advice from his elders. The alliance of Yazīd III and the Yemen duly solidified into a rebellion movement waged against al-Walīd on religious grounds. It would seem that Yazīd exploited religion to achieve his targets.

4.5.5 Ibn Khaldūn and the Qadariya Movement

The role of the Qadariya in the rebellion of Yazīd b. al-Walīd does not figure significantly in Ibn Khaldūn's historiography. He briefly mentions Yazīd b. al-Walīd's Qadarī affiliation, and refers fleetingly to the Qadariya themselves and their influence in the appointment of Ibrāhīm and ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. al-Ḥajjāj as his successors.³⁸⁷ Ibn Khaldūn also acknowledges Manṣūr b. Jamhūr's extending of favour to Yazīd on the basis of their common belief in the Ghaylāniya doctrine,³⁸⁸ as well as his personal and tribal enmity towards Yūsuf b. ʿUmar, who had killed Khālīd al-Qasrī.³⁸⁹ Beyond these few succinct remarks, Ibn Khaldūn's narration of Umayyad history makes no substantial textual reference to the involvement of the Qadariya movement during Yazīd's era.

4.5.6 Concluding Note

The textual study of the pre-modern sources of historiography provides us with significant information about the Qadariya. There appears to be a broad tendency among pre-modern historiographers to express an anti-Umayyad bias. The perceived level of this bias appears particularly pronounced towards later Umayyad rulers. All the earlier historians studied agree

³⁸⁶ *ibid.*, 300/4.

³⁸⁷ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-Ibar*, 112/3.

³⁸⁸ Note: the Ghaylāniya were followers of Ghaylān al-Dimishqī, who introduced the doctrine of *Qadr* and *irja* in Muslim theology. Cf. al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milalwa-al-Niḥal*, 162/1.

³⁸⁹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-Ibar*, 113/3.

about the failure of the later Umayyad caliphs to maintain control of state affairs, and Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik is commonly identified as the last strong ruler to have maintained the balance between different sections of the community. In addition, they all agree on the unsuitability of al-Walīd II for the role. His immaturity and his personal likes and dislikes created inter-personal and inter-tribal rifts, and he is portrayed as a heretic and a self-indulgent character whose enemies were able to exploit him because of these commonly-acknowledged transgressions. The conflict initiated in this way then escalated under Yazīd b. al-Walīd and Marwān b. Muḥammad.

One of the most striking points in these historical sources is that the opponents of al-Walīd II used religion as a weapon against him. They criticised him on religious and moral grounds and accused him of transgression, heresy and, most controversially, of non-belief.³⁹⁰ They also wrote letters about his character to a hundred of the most important mosques. The angry letter from Yazīd b. al-Walīd documents his open rebellion against al-Walīd II, and clearly states his unwillingness to be subjected to such authority. Based on popular regard for his piety and religious appearance, Yazīd b. al-Walīd successfully united all the forces opposed to al-Walīd II.

The sources vividly illustrate the role of Qadarī doctrines and the conflicts that characterised the period preceding the decline of the Umayyads. Pre-modern historiographers do concur that the Umayyads' inability to stabilise the situation in Khurāsān provided an opportunity for Abū Muslim Khurāsānī to initiate a successful campaign for ʿAbbāsīd rule. Their accounts focus on this inability, which they identify and link to the origins of the pro-ʿAbbāsīd campaign as being the central factor in the weakening of the Umayyads. However, due consideration must also be given to the role of internal family conflicts among the Umayyads in precipitating, albeit indirectly, their own decline through lack of corporate and family unity. Al-Yaʿqūbī devotes more space to the Hāshmid-ʿAbbāsīd movement, while downplaying the contribution of tribal factionalism, the royal family's internal conflict, and the Khawārij movement to the eventual decline of the Umayyads. He is similarly dismissive of the role of the Qadarīya in this regard, whereas al-Masʿūdī devotes much time to considering the Qadarīya and their contribution to political change, particularly in

390 The historical sources reveal their unfriendly relations. Moreover, al-Walīd was painted in the sources as a heretic. Al-Iṣfahānī in particular accused him of heresy and transgression since he used to occupy himself in drinking and listening to music and other prohibited activities. cf. Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, 21-22/2.

Damascus. Finally, neither Al-Ṭabarī nor Ibn Athīr views the Qadarīya as a significant factor in the fall of the Umayyads.

4.6 Religious Movements, the Umayyads, and the Theory of Cultural Hegemony

There are various social science theories pertinent to the examination of the role of religion in social construction. Religion is a multi-dimensional phenomenon based not only on metaphysical ideas but also on fulfilling the needs of a society. Its social implications have been extensively studied in the area of cultural theory, with particular focus on political legitimisation and culture. In his seminal work *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Durkheim sets out a methodology for the study of religion as a means of understanding and elaborating processes of social integration. If religion is to be constructed as a *sui generis* phenomenon, it must therefore be interpreted and explained on its own terms, such as sacred and profane. Religious beliefs create ideals for a society, and in Durkheim's view, religion creates social solidarity by providing a unique and coherent worldview, a particular identity, and moral grounds on which to base an ideal society. Durkheim also sees religion as "[not] merely a system of practices, but also a system of ideas whose object is to explain the world."³⁹¹ Following Durkheim's foundational analysis, it is essential to the present study to examine the development of religious thinking and religiously-inspired political action during the late Umayyad period.

4.6.1 The Role of Religion in Gramscian Perspective

The application of Gramsci's theory of hegemony to the study of religious movements and their role in the decline of the Umayyads is both innovative in its approach and apposite in achieving a more nuanced understanding the events of the final seven years of the Umayyad caliphate. This dynasty was finally overthrown by the ʿAbbāsids, in an event widely recognised as a form of revolution. Gramsci asserts that revolution cannot be achieved except by creating a revolutionary movement, and maintains that such a movement can achieve its targets only when it fulfils three basic conditions: (i) a coherent ideology; (ii) unified organization; and (iii) a long-term strategy.³⁹²

³⁹¹ Philip Smith, *Cultural Theory*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 10-12.

³⁹² Gramsci, *Selection From the Prison Notebooks*, 122, 315, 704.

This section tries to show how this framework might be applied to the study of oppositional religious movements of the Umayyad period, and how, through its application, it may be possible to understand the role of religious movements in the fall of the Umayyads. This Gramscian approach offers a method of evaluation that may enable a finer degree of analysis with regard to the religious phenomenon of the Umayyad period.

As Gramsci demonstrates, the counter-hegemonic forces challenge the authority of the hegemon, shattering the structure of the ruling class upon which their authority is based. Although Gramsci's knowledge of Islamic history and this period in particular cannot be presupposed, this thesis argues that the relevance of his framework to questions such as the degree to which politico-religious movements contributed to a regime change is indisputable.

4.6.2 Gramscian Perspectives on the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd Movement

The Hāshmid-ʿAbbāsīd movement was a political movement, initiated on religious grounds which acted to challenge the authority of the Umayyads. Sources describe how the ʿAbbāsīds' vigorously political campaign was led on a religious basis against the ruling Umayyads. The ʿAbbāsīds not only established a vanguard party to achieve their target, but also devised and represented an alternative and feasible ideology with which to challenge Umayyad rule. Successfully mobilising civil society against the state, particularly in Iraq, Khurāsān and Hijāz, the ʿAbbāsīds can be said to have initiated from their inception the real decline of the Umayyads. In this process, and within their movement, the role of ʿAbbāsīd dāʿīs (intellectuals) was fundamental. This section analyses and evaluates the ʿAbbāsīd movement, and the strategy by which they successfully brought about a lasting and effective revolution.

Gramsci suggests that counter-hegemonic forces succeed in their objectives when they have established three viable alternatives: alternative ideology, clear organisation and strategy, and a vanguard party. Certainly, pre-modern historical sources clearly illustrate the ʿAbbāsīd movement's development of a viable alternative ideology. Specifically, the movement successfully incorporated the religious identity and sanctity of the Quraysh into their ideology, and called for the rule of Prophet Muhammad's family. Historically this was not a new slogan; it was rooted in the conflict between ʿAlī and Muʿāwīya and even in the pre-Islamic rivalries of Hāshimids and Umayyads as has been noted above.

From the beginning of ʿAlī's rule to the end of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik's rule, the Hāshimid movement had been unable to achieve its targets. The most important reason for their failure was probably their inability to introduce a viable ideology and a suitable strategy through which to legitimise their goals and actions. While a vanguard party or group of sympathisers had often characterised the Hāshimid movement, this group had previously been unable to fulfil its objectives due to unsuitable ideology and weak strategy. Of central importance to this thesis, therefore, is the question of the nature of the ideological and strategic changes they adopted as a result, in order to gain popular support while under the authority of the Umayyads. Ideologically, they appear to have remained consistent throughout the existence of their movement, and did not undergo any major changes in this regard. Their claim was always to support the religious and political authority of the Prophetic family (ahl al-bayt), even though their ideology was not highly received among the masses during the course of Umayyad rule.

The socio-political changes that occurred during the Umayyad period might have helped substantially to increase the viability of Hāshimid ideology. In the early Umayyad period, this ideology had proved less feasible to implement, due to the major Umayyad support base among the Syrian tribes. It seems these tribes favoured the Umayyads, first because of their close relationships, which involved both blood relations and socio-political affiliations. Secondly, they extended their allegiance to the Umayyads in order to achieve a more centralized authority vis-à-vis the Irāqīs. Hāshimid ideology was therefore unattractive to the Syrians, and proved similarly unappealing for other newly-conquered provinces of the empire, since the Hāshimid ideology failed to attract the masses even in Iraq and Hijāz. Many of the Arab tribes in the Arabian peninsula, and even in Iraq, who attached themselves to the Khawārij refused to accept the Hāshimid's claim to religio-political authority, and rejected any form of Quraysh claim to tribal supremacy. Thus it would appear that the Hāshimid movement remained dormant and weak during the course of the first century of Islam.

During the second hijri century, a significant change can be observed in the socio-political environment of the Umayyad empire, which had expanded considerably and which was now characterised by a multi-faith and multi-ethnic society. However, the central position and authority remained in the hands of the Umayyad aristocracy, supported by the prevailing social dynamics of

an era in which Arab patrons were supported by non-Arab clients. The increasing dissatisfaction with the ruling hegemon among the non-Arab clients created an environment in which the Hāshimid movement could flourish and mobilise its adherents. Their agenda was one of installing an alternative ruling authority that could ensure peace and justice for all sections of the society while limiting the ruling class to functioning in subordination to the leadership of the Prophetic family.

The Irāqīs and Khurāsānīs were dissatisfied with the perpetual and consistent ascendancy of the Syrians under Umayyad patronage. The Irāqīs had made several unsuccessful attempts under the leadership of various tribal and religious groups to win over the Syrian hegemony, having also extended their allegiance to the Hāshimids, but without any tangible results due to the strength of Umayyad rule. The Umayyads remained stable until the end of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik's rule, at which point a conflict emerged between the members of the ruling Umayyad family and ruling tribal elites which was damaging to Umayyad authority. The Syrians, too, lost their power over affairs of state, and this situation created an opportunity to stand against the Syrians under the leadership of the Hāshimids. In this scenario, Hāshimid ideology provided the potential means to challenge Umayyad authority.

There was another reason for the growth of the Hāshimid movement in Khurāsān and Iran. Just as the Umayyads had blood ties with the Syrians, so too the Hāshimids had blood ties with the Iranians that dated from the early period of ʿAlī and Muʿāwīya. The Iranians were therefore more favourably disposed towards Hāshimid ideology, and when the Umayyads' political integrity dissolved, the Iranians and Khurāsānīs stood against them under the leadership of the Hāshimids. A Gramscian view emphasizes that an ideology must be viable to challenge the authority of the hegemon, and to attract the masses to maintain a counter-hegemonic position.³⁹³ Turning to the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd ideology, one can observe that this was not innovative but in fact was historically grounded, and had previously and persistently failed to serve the purpose of the early Hāshimids. In effect, the socio-political environment of that time rendered this ideology suitable for the purposes of its adherents. A Gramscian interpretation might suggest that the viability of

³⁹³ *ibid.*, 406.

this ideology appeared only when the authority of the hegemon became fragile and weak. This in turn suggests that, although the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd's ideology was neither new nor innovative, the socio-political environment of that precise moment gave it the potential to challenge the authority of the Umayyads.

In addition to ideological factors, the success of counter-hegemonic forces, in Gramsci's understanding, is based on the strategy of the organisation and on a vanguard party possessing the ability to mobilise the people to stand against the ruling hegemon. Moreover, when it comes into power the vanguard party must have the capacity to implement the agenda by force.³⁹⁴ The historical sources considered earlier record the successful strategy of the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd movement. In these narratives, the Hāshimid propagandists influenced the opinion of the oppressed towards favouring the ʿAbbāsīd revolution, and the ʿAbbāsīd propagandists convinced the people that only they, the ʿAbbāsīds, could fulfil their demands. This ʿAbbāsīd strategy was ultimately successful.

Their secret movement was organized by the intellectuals of Iraq and Khurāsān. Working covertly in Iraq and Khurāsān without being at odds with other political forces, they observed the political deterioration of the Umayyads but did not participate in the conflict until they had gathered sufficient strength to initiate their own armed struggle. One incident illustrates how Abū Muslim Khurāsānī kept a close watch on the conflict between Naṣr b. Sayyār and al-Kirmānī. He did not supported either of them but when they had destroyed each other's power, he launched the ʿAbbāsīds' armed struggle against them. In Gramscian terms, ʿAbū Muslim Khurāsānī had successfully organized a vanguard party in Iraq and Khurāsān to establish ʿAbbāsīd rule by force. In fact the survival of the later Umayyads was based on Hishām's ability to construct a religiously and morally coherent image in the eyes of people across the Empire, as well as on his capacity to maintain tribal equilibrium in local power politics, an achievement that was never matched by his successor, al-Walīd b. Yazīd, or by any of the later Umayyad rulers.

ʿAbbāsīd propagandists took particular advantage of this situation to criticise the Umayyads and their policies. They highlighted the Umayyads' cruelty and injustice, denigrating their heretical

³⁹⁴ *ibid.*, 47.

practices in particular. Pre-modern sources on Umayyad history record the criticism of Umayyad rulers by the religious movement; Al-Walīd and Marwān b. Muḥammad in particular were criticised and blamed for heretical ideas, and their authority was challenged on both religious and moral grounds. Meanwhile the propagandists of the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd movement painted the members of the prophetic family as pious and deserving of the right to rule. Marwān b. Muḥammad was a strong ruler, but even he could no longer revive the religious and legal authority of the Umayyads. He remained in conflict with the Khawārij and other contenders for the caliphate, and ultimately was unable to establish his rule satisfactorily in Khurāsān where the ʿAbbāsīd movement was flourishing.

The above events show that the ʿAbbāsīd movement comfortably fulfils the criteria for counter-hegemonic force according to a Gramscian view. ʿAbbāsīd ideology was based on the amalgamation of religious doctrine, Qurayshī tribal supremacy, and in particular support for the Prophetic family, which was perhaps the most suitable ideology in the prevailing circumstances. First, this ideology was propagated by the intellectuals and remained valid until the fall of Baghdād in 1256 AD. Secondly, ʿAbbāsīd strategy and organisation provided the potential to achieve their political goals.

On the other hand, neither the Khawārij nor the Qadarīya fulfil the criteria for Gramsci's counter-hegemonic movement theory. Historically the Khawārij had a long tradition as a counter-hegemonic force, having first rejected the religious authority of Quraysh on both a tribal and a racial basis, and subsequently initiated their resistance movement during the rule of ʿUthmān and ʿAlī. They argued for the equal status of all people irrespective of tribal affiliation or ethnic identity, but while this ideology attracted the non-Qurayshī Arabs and non-Arab mawālī, the central socio-political and religious position of the Quraysh in the Arabian peninsula still gave the Umayyads tremendous capacity to rule. Their intellectuals had established the moral and religious authority of the Umayyads by preparing the minds of the masses to accept the authority and hegemony of the Quraysh; similarly, the ḥadīth scholars and jurists validated their supremacy. In short, the Umayyads consolidated their power due to their strong Arab-based affiliation.

The Khawārij had to face strong opposition from the Quraysh since they presented their ideology after the battle of Ṣiffīn after they had left ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib's party. The chronicles record, as

already discussed, how the Khawārij rejected the authority of both ʿAlī and Muʿāwīya, who in turn were both resolved to fight against the Khawārij. The Khawārij movement persisted during the long period of Umayyad rule, having been organised after the death of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik. The political deterioration of the Umayyads, the awareness of deprivation among the non-Arabs and mawālī, and conflict within the ruling aristocracy were the main reasons for the rise of the oppositional forces, and the Khawārij ideology motivated many of the oppressed people to rise against the ruling hegemon. Historical sources, including those considered earlier in this study, frequently identify the Khawārij as the greatest challenge and threat to Umayyad rule. Therefore Marwān b. Muḥammad focused on eliminating them from the political scene and successfully crushed them.

From a Gramscian perspective, the Khawārij ideology was a potential challenge to the ruling hegemon. However, the ideology of the Hāshimids-ʿAbbāsids wielded far wider influence because of its synthesis of both religious and tribal identities. Meanwhile the Khawārij failed to devise a viable strategy to implement their resistance movement successfully, and were unable to divert the attention of Marwān b. Muḥammad as the Hāshimids-ʿAbbāsids had done. The Khawārij were undoubtedly resilient but the eventual emergence of conflict within their organisation made their struggle unsuccessful.

In contrast to the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsids and the Khawārij, the role of the Qadarīya is perhaps insignificant, although their contribution was of considerable importance in the case of Yazīd b. al-Walīd, who initiated his rebellion movement on the basis of their doctrine, and because the Qadarī ideology also attracted the masses due to its ideals of equality and justice for all. Yazīd b. al-Walīd criticised al-Walīd b. Yazīd on religious grounds. According to Hakim, “the impact of the Qadarite doctrine started to show its indomitable force and effect in the intellectual and political activities as Umayyad rule neared its conclusion.”³⁹⁵

It is possible that, in his attempt to win the support of a religious class, particularly the Qadarīya and Khawārij, Yazīd b. al-Walīd actually used the Qadarī ideology to initiate his resistance movement and then consolidate his authority. His reputed assertion that whosoever was the most

³⁹⁵ Hakim, *Predestination*, 200.

pious among the Muslims was the most suited to be caliph is almost identical to the tenets of Khawārij ideology.³⁹⁶ The role of the Qadariya is therefore of importance in relation to Yazīd b. al-Walīd, who utilised its doctrine to validate his rebellion and authority.³⁹⁷

In contrast to the ʿAbbāsids and the Khawārij, the Qadariya attempted to bring revolution within the ruling structure of the hegemon class. In Gramscian terms, this constitutes a form of passive revolution.³⁹⁸ The Qadariya organisation was not strong, given its large number of intellectual supporters and its relatively few leading commanders. Therefore, it did not initiate the resistance movement; rather it sought to attract influential people among the ruling class who could enforce Qadarī ideology. While the Qadariya's strategy was theoretically suitable and achieved their targets within a short period of time, in practice it was unsustainable because of their weak internal organisation. The early death of Yazīd b. al-Walīd signalled the end of the Qadariya political ideology; however, as an intellectual movement, the Qadariya remained alive even during ʿAbbāsīd rule.

The above analysis suggests that the religio-political Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd movement fulfils the Gramscian criteria for a counter-hegemonic force. This group provided a suitable ideology with which to challenge hegemonic authority, as well as a viable strategy to achieve their targets and a well-organised vanguard party to implement their policies and maintain their authority. In contrast to the Hāshimids-Abbāsids, the Khawārij could not devise an adequate strategy to achieve their goal. Moreover, their organisational structure could not remain impervious to Marwān's attack. The Qadariya organisational structure, too, was weak, although their strategy was excellent, and they achieved their targets without being drawn into a major conflict. However, their frail organisational configuration meant that long term rule would never be possible.

The ideology of these movements was devised in order to address the needs of the social changes that occurred during the Umayyad period. Umayyad rule was typified by Arab hegemony over the subject peoples. The Arabs were a privileged class while the mawālī were a deprived class that

³⁹⁶ Dennett, *Marwān*, 220.

³⁹⁷ Judd, *The Third Fitna*, 87, 88.

³⁹⁸ Gramsci, Selection From the Prison Notebooks, 287.

struggled for equal rights. The following chapter evaluates the nature of the relations between Arabs and the mawālī.

5 Chapter Five: Arab versus non-Arab, and Perceptions of the Mawālī

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the social changes during the Umayyad period that contributed to the development and decline of Umayyad rule, and suggests that a kind of multi-cultural society emerged during this era from Arab interaction with people of different regions and ethnicities. Some scholars argue that the Umayyad rule was typified by Arab hegemony and domination over the subject peoples across the Umayyad caliphate, and that the socio-economic policies of the Umayyads resulted in the triumph of feudal relations among the Arabs and mawālī. Economically, the Arab elites appeared to be a privileged class enjoying a high social status not permitted to the mawālī who, as a deprived class, struggled for equal rights and bore a heavy burden of taxes. Thus further analysis of Arab/non-Arab interaction and perception of mawālī is required for a better understanding of the extent to which the Umayyad policies were justified, together with an evaluation of the impact of these policies on society. More specifically the chapter scrutinises the nature of the relations between Arabs and the mawālī: how the mawālī social group emerged, how this phenomenon influenced society and contributed to the decline of Umayyad rule, and how these issues were presented in the pre-modern sources and interpreted in the modern sources.

Modern scholarly findings regarding the mawālī as well as the manner in which such opinions were derived from Muslim historical sources are looked at initially. Modern scholarship can be broadly categorised into two groups. The first offers a classical interpretation, argues for the Revolution's predominantly Iranian identity, and is expressed by scholars such as Wellhausen, and van Vloten,³⁹⁹ while the second is a revisionist school that emerged during the course of the twentieth century, the leading members of which are Dennett, Shaban, Sharon, Crone and Agha.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁹ cf. Wellhausen, *Arab Kingdom*; also G. van Vloten, *al-Siyāda al-ʿArabīya wa-Shiʿa wa-al-Isrāʿīliyyāt fī ʿAhd Banī Umayya*.

⁴⁰⁰ cf. Dennett, *Marwān ibn Muḥammad*; Shaban, *The Abbasid Revolution*; Moshe Sharon, *Black Banners from the East*, (Jerusalem and Leiden: the Hebrew University-E. J. Brill, 1983). Note: Saleh Said Agha writes: "The evolution of the controversy has been progressively and cumulatively depicted in the many reviews and critiques offered by more recent authors of their predecessors' work." Cf. also Dennett, "Marwān" pp. 1-5 of the preface; Omer, *The Abbasid Caliphate 132/750-170/786*, pp. 57-58; Shaban, *The Abbasid Revolution*, xiii-xv; Elton L. Daniel, *The Political and Social History of Khurāsān under ʿAbbasid Rule, 747-820* (A publication of the Iran-American

A wide range of literature was consulted, with the goal of providing fresh insight into previous investigations in this field.

Modern historiographers interpret pre-modern narratives on the role of mawālī and draw divergent conclusions. In order to ascertain the strength of the argument and interpretation of such scholars, significant historical chronicles are examined, including those of al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Masʿūdī, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Athīr, and Ibn Khaldūn. Arabic literature is also extensively consulted in order to identify the socio-political role of the mawālī during the last decade of Umayyad rule and their contribution to its disintegration.

Finally, Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony is applied in order to examine the role of mawālī in socio-political spheres during Umayyad rule and how they contributed to its rise and fall, as well as to investigate the manner in which the dominant class successfully maintained its authority through coercive measures and through presenting values acceptable to the mawālī. This study finds that many leading members from the mawālī played the role of 'deputies' of the ruling class, according to a Gramscian perspective, and analyses the ways in which class and identity consciousness gradually developed among the mawālī, together with a sense of deprivation and a desire for equal rights. Since mawālī participation in anti-Umayyad resistance movements was a significant aspect of their political consciousness, oppositional movements devised their alternative ideology and presented moral values to attract the mawālī. The study will therefore consider the role of mawālī in the ʿAbbāsīd revolution and in the fall of Umayyads, applying Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony.

Foundation), (Minneapolis and Chicago: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1979), 60-61, n. 3; Lassner Jacob, *The Shaping of the Abbasid Rule* (Princeton Studies on the Near East), (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press 1980), 3-7; Jacob Lassner, *Islamic Revolution and Historical Memory* (American Oriental Series, Volume 66), (New Haven CT: American Oriental Society, 1986), xi-xii, n. 2; Saleh Said Agha, "The Agents and Forces that Toppled the Umayyad Caliphate", PhD. thesis, University of Toronto, (1993), 7-13, 16 and *passim*.

5.2 The Mawālī of the Umayyad Period

The mawālī are those non-Arabs who entered Arab society by attaching themselves to an Arab tribe. They played a vital role in the socio-religious movement of the Umayyad period. Hamdī Shāhīn notes that the Muslim historiographers employ the word mawālī for the non-Arab Muslims of Iraq, Fāras, Khurāsān and Māwarā al-Nahr, while the non-Arab Muslims of North Africa and Andalusia were called Berbers because of their original name. The Barbar joined Muslim society as equal partners, contributed in all sections of Muslim society, and, unlike the mawālī, were not treated as inferior.⁴⁰¹

The mawālī can be variously categorised based on the nature of their work and social status. Al-Salābī notes that the mawālī participated actively in socio-political and intellectual activities, and were appointed as military leaders, and officials in governmental institutions. Similarly, many of them gained a central religious position and produced copious scholarly works. This study categorises them broadly as follows:

- A. Those mawālī who had been slaves and were later freed by their Arab lords, after which they allied themselves to various Arab tribes or associated themselves with one of the leading Arab tribes. This type of mawālī played a central role in the political establishment. Sarjūn b. Maṣṣūr al-Rūmī worked as a kātīb (secretary) to Muʿāwīya in the finance ministry. Similarly, Mirdās and Zadhān Furrūkh, mawālī of Ziyād worked as kātibs. Abū Zaʿīzaʿah was mawla of ʿAbd al-Malik and also his kātīb, while Shuʿayb al-Ṣābī and Yāfiʿ b. Zawayb were mawālī of Walīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik and worked for him as kātibs. Similarly, several leading Muslim warriors and conquerors were also mawālī. These include Ṭāriq b. Ziyād, a mawla of Barbar origin,⁴⁰² Mūsā b. Nuḍayr's father, a mawla from ʿAyn al-Tamar, Abū Muhājir Dīnār, a mawla

⁴⁰¹ Ḥamdī Shāhīn, *al-Dawla al-Umawiya*, 272. Al-Ṭabarī, notes that the Barbar killed Yazīd b. Abī Muslim, the governor of Africa, when he attempted to impose *jizya* on the Muslim Barbar who migrated towards the cities as did Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, after which they nominated Muḥammad b. Yazīd, a former governor, as their *wālī*. In a letter to Yazīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik they swore that they had not revolted against him. Rather they killed Yazīd b. Abī Muslim because the Muslim community was not pleased with him. Yazīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik agreed with them and confirmed the governorship of Muḥammad b. Yazīd, a *mawla* of Anṣār, in 102 AH (Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 97/4).

⁴⁰² Al-Ṣalābī, *al-Dawlah al-Umawiya*, 689/2.

of Anṣār of Afriqiya, and Yazīd b. Muḥammad b. Yazīd were all mawālī and governors of Afriqiya. They played a vital role in the Muslim conquest and the expansion of the empire.

- B. Those mawālī who were leading Islamic scholars and who had gained wide acceptance and prestige in the Muslim community. They contributed to all disciplines, including Qurānic studies, ḥadīth, and Arab literature, and included Rabiʿa, Nāfiʿ, a mawlā attached to ʿUmar in Medina, Mujaḥid b. Jabar, a mawlā attached to Qays al-Makhzūmī, ʿIkrama, a mawlā attached to IbnʿAbbās and ʿAṭā b. ʿAbī Rubāḥ in Mecca, and al-Ḥassan al-Baṣrī in Basra whose father was a mawlā of Zayd b. Thābit. Similarly Makḥūl and Yazīd b. Ḥabīb were mawālī and leading scholars in Syria and Egypt.⁴⁰³
- C. Those mawālī who accepted Islam without affiliating themselves to any particular tribe. They joined the socio-political movements according to their regional context, for example, actively participating in the socio-political life of the Umayyad era. From the early Umayyad era onwards, their participation in rebellions is evident, and includes the rebellions of al-Mukhtār and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ashʿath. The role of mawālī in the army of IbnʿAshʿath is considered to be one of the earliest and best examples of mawālī (i.e. non-Arab) reaction against a tyrannical Umayyad administration. The following sections study in more detail the modern sources on the role of mawālī in Ibn Ashʿath movement.

5.2.1 Modern Sources on the Mawālī Role in Ibn Ashʿath’s Movement: Non-Arab Awakening

Ibn Ashʿath’s movement is one of the earliest movements to feature significant mawālī participation, and has been the subject of much scholarly investigation. Kremer, Mullur and van Volten stress the non-Arab, mawālī component of these rebellion movements, which were initiated to obtain equal socio-political rights.⁴⁰⁴ However many other modern scholars, such as

⁴⁰³ *ibid.*, 690/2.

⁴⁰⁴ Alfred Von Kremer (d. 1889), an early Austrian orientalist, evaluated the social structure of Muslim society and its development. Wellhausen notes that he “has shown the rebellion of Ibn Ashʿath in a new light, by which he has dazzled others, e.g., A Mullur and G van Vloten. He has, to wit, connected it with the attempt of the Mawālī, i.e., the subjects gone over to Islam in Kufa and Basra, to obtain equal political rights with the ruling nobility, i.e., the Arabs, to be freed from the subject-tax and received on the pension list, which hitherto was a register of the Arab nobility.” Wellhausen, *Arab Kingdom*, 243.

Wellhausen, Shaban and Hawting, argue that the Ibn Ash'ath movement was not essentially a mawālī phenomenon, suggesting instead that while the mawālī had participated, their role was secondary; for example, they participated in the battle but the central role was played by the Yemen tribes of Kinda, Hamadan and Madhij in Kufa, who supported Ibn Ash'ath as their own representative. This conflict appears to have been a war of supremacy between two provinces of the Arab Empire. The Syrian and Irāqī Arabs were struggling for greater authority while the mawālī troops supported each group.⁴⁰⁵

Wellhausen analyses Kremer's argument comprehensively, and finds it to be established on the basis of Jāhiz's account, reported in al-ʿIqd al-Farīd. Moreover, he rebuffs Kremer's interpretation as one based on the account of al-ʿIqd, a literary work but not a reliable historical source.⁴⁰⁶ Historical sources, Wellhausen argues, do not support Kremer's arguments. A great number of mawālīs took part in the rebellion "but even there, there is nothing to show that the event was instigated by them."⁴⁰⁷ In fact, it was the Arab aristocracy who opposed the arrogant conduct of al-Ḥajjāj. Wellhausen further maintains that "Ibn Ash'ath had no religious motives. It was rather a renewed and desperately powerful attempt of the Iraqites to shake off the Syrian yoke... The nature of the struggle, was not a contest of mawālī against the Arab, but the Iraqīs against the Syrian Arabs."⁴⁰⁸

Sa'dī also validates Wellhausen's opinion, maintaining the role of the mawālī in Ibn Ash'ath's movement was marginal. In fact, there had been a personal clash between Ibn Ash'ath and al-Ḥajjāj even before the departure of the peacock army under the leadership of Ash'ath. Al-Ḥajjāj organised this army to attack Sijistān in 80 AH and appointed as its leader Ash'ath, who brought it to victory.⁴⁰⁹ Being a governor of the Eastern part of the caliphate, al-Ḥajjāj ordered him to continue fighting. Ibn Ash'ath however refused, and halted fighting until the following year. He challenged al-Ḥajjāj without challenging the authority of ʿAbd al-Malik,⁴¹⁰ so it would seem that

⁴⁰⁵ Wellhausen, *Arab Kingdom*, 248.

⁴⁰⁶ *ibid.*, 244.

⁴⁰⁷ *ibid.*, 245.

⁴⁰⁸ *ibid.*, 248, 249.

⁴⁰⁹ Sa'dī Abū Jayb, *Marwān*, 138-139; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 142/5.

⁴¹⁰ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 630/4.

the basic source of Ibn Ash'ath's rebellion was his conflict with al-Ḥajjāj. Ibn Ash'ath's army consisted not only of thousands of non-Arabs but was also supported by thousands of Arabs. As al-Ṭabarī records:

The people of Kūfa, Baṣra, and frontier regions of Dayr al-Jamājim and leading scholars of both cities of Kūfa and Baṣra gathered in the battle against al-Ḥajjāj. Their unity was based on their abhorrence and hatred of al-Ḥajjāj. They were more than one hundred thousand fighters including the mawālī under the commandership of Ibn Ash'ath. They demanded to sack al-Ḥajjāj from his position.⁴¹¹

On the basis of al-Ṭabarī's account, Sa'dī views the mawālīs' role is marginal in the Ibn Ash'ath movement. In this context, it is pertinent to revisit the argument of Von Kremer, A. Mullur and G. Van Volten that the mawālī were being marginalised and therefore made an alliance with Ibn Ash'ath to participate in the assault against the Umayyad rule.⁴¹² It is important to assess the extent to which early historical sources support such a verdict. In order to understand affairs more realistically, a careful study of the early sources is pertinent and will assist in identifying the narratives of pre-modern historiographers on the role of non-Arabs in the Ibn Ash'ath movement.

5.2.2 The Role of Mawālī in Ibn Ash'ath's Movement in Pre-Modern Sources

Pre-modern narratives on the mawālīs' role in Ibn Ash'ath movement are notably consistent. Al-Ṭabarī gives a detailed account of the Ibn Ash'ath movement, recording that al-Ḥajjāj appointed al-Muhallab in Khurāsān and 'Ubayd Allah b. Abī Bakra in Sajistān in 79 AH. The latter remained there for the rest of the year and attacked Rutbīl (or Zambil), a king of Zabulistan, whose rule extended from Kabul to Qandahar and Zaranj, or Zabulistan. He was in an agreement with the Arab government but refused to pay the tribute during the civil war. 'Ubayd Allah initiated a military campaign against Rutbīl by the orders of al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf. However, his campaign failed to achieve the required targets.⁴¹³ According to al-Ḥajjāj a magnificent army of forty thousand

⁴¹¹ *ibid.*, 630/4.

⁴¹² Van Volten, G. *Al-Sayṭara al-'Arabīya*, 112-113; Muḥammad Badī' Sharīf, *al-Ṣarā' bayna al-'Arab wa-al-Mawālī*, 26.

⁴¹³ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 614-615/3.

troops was prepared: twenty thousand from Kūfa and twenty thousand from Baṣra under the command of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. al-Ashʿath. The troops were well equipped with the best horses and ammunition, prompting ʿUbbād b. al-Huṣayn al-Ḥabṭī to observe that he had not seen that kind of arrangement for any previous battle. Al-Ḥajjāj also gave them a sum of fifty-five thousand dirham as additional money. These meticulous arrangements for the troops inspired the name ‘Peacock Army’.⁴¹⁴

The hostile relations between al-Ḥajjāj and Ibn Ashʿath are well documented and the subject of several anecdotes. The question remains: if there was unfriendliness and lack of trust between them, why then did al-Ḥajjāj appoint Ibn Ashʿath as the commander of the forces for such a significant battle? Al-Ṭabarī records some reports on the topic, stating that Ibn Ashʿath was the most hated person in the eyes of al-Ḥajjāj who used to say, “Whenever I saw him, I planned for his murder.” Similarly, when Shuʿbī, one of Ibn Ashʿath’s associates, informed him of al-Ḥajjāj’s evil intentions, he in turn confirmed his ambition of ending the former’s authority.⁴¹⁵ Al-Ṭabarī reports that Ismāʿīl b. al-Ashʿath, uncle of Ibn Ashʿath, went to al-Ḥajjāj and asked him not to appoint Ibn Ashʿath as commander of troops because of his rebellious tendencies. Al-Ḥajjāj replied that he wanted Ibn Ashʿath to disobey him.⁴¹⁶

Ibn Ashʿath attacked Rutbīl, capturing many of his cities and castles and gathering a large sum of bounty from the lands of Rutbīl. He appointed administrators (ʿāmil) in the captured cities and made peace agreements with them. Furthermore, his forces were forbidden to roam around and plunder the region of Rutbīl. Ibn Ashʿath advanced cautiously, claiming a reasonable success for that year and promising a further campaign in the following year, 81 AH. He informed al-Ḥajjāj of these plans and his successes.⁴¹⁷ Upon receiving the information, al-Ḥajjāj criticised Ibn Ashʿath and sent him letters telling him to initiate battle immediately without wasting any time, otherwise he would appoint Ishāq b. Muḥammad as the commander of troops. Ibn Ashʿath’s reputation amongst the army was high. He summoned the troops and delivered a speech, informing them that

⁴¹⁴ *ibid.*, 617/3.

⁴¹⁵ *ibid.*, 617/3.

⁴¹⁶ *ibid.*, 618/3.

⁴¹⁷ *ibid.*, 618/3.

he had stopped the fighting for that year, due to on-the-ground requirements for careful and cautious advancement in the lands of Rutbīl. However, al-Ḥajjāj condemned this decision and urged him to advance. Ibn Ash'ath again delivered a sermon to the troops, telling them that if they were ready for further advancement then he would accompany them, otherwise he was reluctant to advance. Consequently, the Peacock Army turned against al-Ḥajjāj, declining his decision and challenging his authority. Ultimately, they took the oath of allegiance to Ibn Ash'ath.⁴¹⁸

Under Ibn Ash'ath's command, the Peacock Army started to march against al-Ḥajjāj towards Iraq.⁴¹⁹ Encountering serious confrontations with al-Ḥajjāj's army near Tustar, they nevertheless captured Tustar. Then they marched towards Basra and Kufa, rejecting the authority of 'Abd al-Malik and al-Ḥajjāj.⁴²⁰ Many pious and rich people in Kufa and Basra supported Ibn Ash'ath, and were consequently furious at the continued fighting between Ibn Ash'ath and predominantly between the Iraqī army and the Syrian army of al-Ḥajjāj. However, the battle of Dayr al-Jamājim played a decisive role in the decline of the Ibn Ash'ath movement. Al-Ṭabarī reports negotiation proceedings between the Syrian authorities and Ibn Ash'ath. 'Abd al-Malik sent his son 'Abd Allah and brother Muḥammad b. Marwān to Dayr al-Jamajim, who offered to remove Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf from the governorship of Iraq and to appoint Ibn Ash'ath as wālī for his lifetime in any city he desired. They further promised the Iraqī troops would receive the same pay as the Syrians. Ibn Ash'ath's leaders gathered around him to consider the offers, which he nevertheless rejected, recalling the victory of Tustar; and then he called his army to fight against the losing Syrian power. The negotiation had failed and a battle began, culminating in the victory of al-Ḥajjāj's Syrian Army.⁴²¹ Ibn Ash'ath fled to Sijistān but was later captured and killed by al-Ḥajjāj.⁴²²

Significant information is obtained from al-Ṭabarī's description of the Ibn Ash'ath movement. However, Dayr Jamājim's reports also contained important information, particularly in that the negotiations reflect the nature of grievances within Ibn Ash'ath's army, grievances essentially held

⁴¹⁸ *ibid.*, 622-623 /3.

⁴¹⁹ *ibid.*, 623/3.

⁴²⁰ *ibid.*, 625/3.

⁴²¹ *ibid.*, 630-631/3.

⁴²² *ibid.*, 640-649/3.

against al-Ḥajjāj's policies and uncompromising stance. For example, the Iraqī troops were not paid the same as the Syrians. ʿAbd al-Malik attempted to resolve these issues according to the Iraqīs' wishes in order to prevent them from the battle. As far as the issue of the mawālī is concerned, there is not sufficient evidence in al-Ṭabarī's reporting to prove their central role in the rebellion movement. Al-Ṭabarī mentions only one instance in which the mawālī of Kufa, Basra and the Frontier regions participated in the battle of Dayr al-Jamājim with their masters.⁴²³ Textual reading of al-Ṭabarī's history validates the argument that the participation of the mawālī in the battle was of a secondary nature, and that they merely supported the tribes with whom they were associated in their subordination. They might have held reservations against the Umayyads at this stage but did not have sufficient strength to initiate a movement for rebellion, nor were they able to gain a significant position in any independent rebellion movement. Assertions of their supposed central role in the Ibn Ashʿath movement are not supported by historical documentary evidence. While the Ibn Ashʿath movement was indeed a significant protest against the unjust policies of al-Ḥajjāj in Iraq, the movement's failure further cemented the Umayyads' hold in the region. Kufa lost its central position when al-Ḥajjāj built the city of Wāsiṭ to control the region. The Umayyads did not change their military strategy.

Al-Yaʿqūbī's account also contains important information about the rebellion of Ibn Ashʿath. Most coincides with what was reported by al-Ṭabarī. It does, however, differ from al-Ṭabarī's narration on several significant points. Al-Yaʿqūbī notes that the Peacock Army numbered one hundred thousand troops, but does not mention that ʿAbd al-Malik sent his son ʿAbd Allah with Muḥammad b. Marwān to initiate peace talks with Ibn Ashʿath. Moreover, he does not record the number of Ibn Ashʿath's troops. He reports that after the defeat in Dayr al-Jamājim, Ibn Ashʿath went to Sijistan and when the local administration refused him refuge he went to Rutbīl and claimed sanctuary, according to their earlier agreement. However, Rutbīl handed him over to al-Ḥajjāj, taking some concessions in return. On the way to Ḥajjāj, Ibn Ashʿath jumped from the roof of a house at Rukhj, an act which killed him. Al-Yaʿqūbī records that a group of scholars supported Ibn Ashʿath. These were highly eminent and pious people such as Ḥasan Baṣrī, ʿĀmir b. Sharaḥbīl

⁴²³ *ibid.*, 630/3.

al-Shu^ʿbī, Sa^ʿīd b. Jubayr and Ibrāhīm al-Nakh^ʿī. Al-Ya^ʿqūbī mentioned neither the role of the mawālī in the movement nor any hostility between Ibn Ash^ʿath and al-Ḥajjāj or between the Iraqīs and Syrians. He simply shows that conflict emerged only when Ibn Ash^ʿath refused to accept the orders of al-Ḥajjāj and discontinued the attacks in the region of Rutbīl.⁴²⁴

Al-Mas^ʿūdī also describes these events. His description, in contrast to al-Ṭabarī's, is concise. He does not illustrate the event in all its details; however, he states that al-Ḥajjāj appointed him as ʿāmil in Sajistan, Bust and Rukhj, where Turks resided. He explains that the king of this region, attached to Hind (the Indian Subcontinent), was called Rutbil. Al-Mas^ʿūdī does not mention the Peacock Army, but does note that Ibn Ash^ʿath rebelled against al-Ḥajjāj and went to Kirmān and then to Basra to fight against al-Ḥajjāj. Al-Mas^ʿūdī briefly records that there were more battles fought between al-Ḥajjāj and Ibn Ash^ʿath and that al-Ḥajjāj finally crushed the strength of Ibn Ash^ʿath. He fled to Rutbīl but was killed, and his head brought to al-Ḥajjāj.

Al-Mas^ʿūdī records the speech al-Ḥajjāj delivered on that occasion, in which he shows his anger against the people of Iraq, condemning them for their conspiracy and hypocrisy, and accusing them of cowardliness in frontier wars and insincerity in peaceful times. However, he praised the Syrians for their determination in the war and sincerity in the state of peace.⁴²⁵ This speech in particular shows that the people of Iraq played a decisive role in Ibn Ash^ʿath's rebellion. Al-Mas^ʿūdī does not refer to the mawālī or their participation in the rebellion. On the basis of his depiction, the role of the mawālī appears so unimportant to the rebellion movement that it does not warrant a mention.

Al-Ṭabarī's history influenced almost all later historians, including Ibn Athīr and Ibn Khaldūn. Both of these historians reproduced almost all the information given in al-Ṭabarī's monumental

⁴²⁴ Al-Ya^ʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 455-458/2. Al-Balādhurī also gives a short description of Ibn Ash^ʿath's rebellion. He notes that al-Ḥajjāj appointed ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ash^ʿath in Sijistan but he revolted against ʿAbd al-Malik and al-Ḥajjāj. He took refuge with Rutbīl because of al-Ḥajjāj's fear. However, Rutbīl handed him over to al-Ḥajjāj and made a peace pact with him and gained some tax concessions. Thus, it can be observed that al-Balādhurī did not make any reference to the *mawālī* and their role in the rebellion movement (al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, 562-563).

⁴²⁵ al-Mas^ʿūdī, *Tārīkh*, 168/3.

work.⁴²⁶ According to their view, the mawālīs' role was secondary in Ibn Ash'ath's rebellion, and derived from the conflict between the authority of al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf and Ibn 'Ash'ath. The pre-Modern sources of the period do not support modern scholars' standpoint that a great number of the mawālī participated in the rebellion movement of Ibn Ash'ath because they were not given equal rights. Instead, pre-Modern chronicles confirm the participation of the mawālī in the rebellion but construct this as the result of their affiliation to those Arabs who were fighting against al-Ḥajjāj's autocratic behaviour. In other words, while they confirm the views, for example, of Wellhausen, they provide little evidence to correlate with the thesis of Kremer who, in fact, derives much of his argument from the Shu'ūbī literature sources containing anti-Umayyad elements and presenting the role of mawālī in a manner contrary to what is illustrated in historical sources. It is thus useful to consider how Shu'ūbī literature depicts the mawālīs and to identify the social significance of this movement for the present study.

5.3 The Social Significance of the Shu'ūbīya Movement in Modern Sources

The mawālīs' quest for equal rights was neither purely economic nor political, since it took place during a cultural struggle between the Arabs and non-Arabs, particularly between Arab and Persian cultures. Gibb has analysed the social significance of the Shu'ūbīya movement, arguing that it was not simply a conflict between Arabs and non-Arabs on the basis of political nationalism but rather represented a struggle between two variant schools of literature, each seeking to define the destiny of Islamic culture. Gibb highlights the economic conflict between the Arabs and non-Arab mawālīs in Iraq and Khurāsān. However, it would be misleading and an over-generalization to conclude, on the basis of such conflict, that serious rivalry existed between the Persians and Arabs. The most

⁴²⁶ Similarly, Ibn Kathīr's narrative regarding the rebellion is almost analogous to that described by al-Ṭabarī. Ibn Kathīr records that Ibn Ash'ath delivered a sermon that said, "Al-Ḥajjāj is not of any importance; come and join us to fight 'Abd al-Malik. All people of Basra irrespective of their age and occupation joined the movement whether they were jurists or scholars (*qurrā*), old or young" (Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyawa-al-Nihāya*, 40/9). Ibn Kathīr's narration of the event of the Dayr al-Jamājim is almost the same as al-Ṭabarī described. Ibn Kathīr also reports that there were one thousand soldiers in Ibn Ash'ath's army who were salaried, and there were their *mawālī* in the same number (Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyawa-al-Nihāya*, 44/9). Ibn Kathīr gave a detailed description of the scholars who participated in the battle of Dayr al-Jamājim and were killed (Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyawa-al-Nihāya*, 54-57/9). Ibn Kathīr reports that al-Ḥajjāj killed about one hundred and thirty thousand people who fought for Ibn Ash'ath including Muḥammad b. Sa'd b. Abī Waqās and Sa'īd b. Jubayr.

important factor contributing to state disintegration was a division among the Arab conquerors. This division was not based on the tribal factionalism that existed between the northern and southern Arabs; rather, it emerged from tensions between the Arab army (muqātila) who were actively-engaged military forces, and those who, having settled in Iraq and Khurāsān, had ceased to be soldiers. The latter may broadly be categorised as the Arabs of Iraq while the muqātila mostly consisted of the Syrian Arabs or active military.

The early endeavour to understand and harmonise cultural differences gradually weakened the Arabs, resulting in non-Arab criticism (particularly from the secretaries) of the Arab tradition and its values. Gibb suggests that such anti-Arab sentiment on their part became evident in the first half of the third century, and that, due to their particular behaviour they were given the title ‘Shu‘ūbi’. Consequently, a Shu‘ūbī movement came into existence in the beginning of the third century. These non-Arab mawālī secretaries of the Shu‘ūbīya, unlike their predecessors, argued for the superiority of the Persians and other non-Arabs over the Arabs, a claim not based on the putative superiority of religion, but rather on the pre-eminence of non-Arab socio-cultural and civilisational elements. However the works of the early non-Arab secretaries of the second century of hijra, such as ‘Abd al-Hamid and Ibn al-Muqaffa, do not display such overt Shu‘ūbī tendencies.⁴²⁷

Gibb also analyses Arabic literature written in the second hijra century / 8th century CE. He argues that the compilation of Arabic literature had begun in Iraq through the study of the Arabic language and culture of the Arabian Peninsula. In Syria, too, similar work was initiated, this time focusing on the study of the Syrian tradition. The Umayyad caliph Hishām employed secretaries for translation and compilation of literary, historical and philosophical works of the Persian and Roman civilizations. His chief Secretary, the mawla Salīm, a non-Arab, translated Aristotle’s epistles to Alexander. Al-Mas‘ūdī also records that a book of Persian history was translated for

⁴²⁷ Gibb, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, 66-67. Gibb notes: “The original Shu‘ūbīya were the Kharijites, who on religious grounds maintained the doctrine that no race or tribe enjoyed any inherent superiority, and in particular opposed the theory of the inherent right of the Quraish to the caliphate. In rejecting any exclusive superiority of the Arabs, the Kharijite shuubis equally rejected any superiority of the Persians.” Gibb, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, 67.

Hishām.⁴²⁸ Gibb emphasises the key role played by these secretaries in translating and recording the history of the Arabs. They continued working under the subsequent ʿAbbāsid rulers, particularly those serving under the Iraqī administration, such as Abū Ayyūb al-Muriyānī, chancellor of al-Manṣūr and Rozbih Ibn Muqaffa, one of the most celebrated translators of Persian works into Arabic. These secretaries played a major role in knowledge transmission, since they compiled an amalgamation of Arab and Persian traditions and values. No documentary evidence exists in the early works to support the view that the non-Arab secretaries attacked the Arabs under a Persian nationalist agenda. Gibb nevertheless asserts:

During the second half of the second (eighth) century, Persian resistance (if nationalism is too strong or misleading a term) had repeatedly displayed itself in Khurasan and the northern provinces of Iran in risings which were not only anti-Arab but also anti-Islamic. There is nothing to suggest that the secretaries as a class were sympathetic towards these movements; all the presumptions, indeed, are to the contrary. Their aim was not to destroy the Islamic empire, but to remould its political and social institutions and the inner spirit of Islamic culture on the model of the Sasanian institutions and values, which represented in their eyes the highest political wisdom.⁴²⁹

Gibb describes a Persian resistance movement which influenced the people of Khurāsān and the northern provinces of Iran during the second half of the second century and invoked anti-Arab sentiment. The argument is plausible, due to literary evidence in the works of Abū Ayyūb al-Muriyānī and Ibn Muqaffa in particular. However such sources, unlike the historical ones, contain most of the anti-Arab material. Secondly the Shuʿūbī movement lacked strength during the first half of the eighth century CE. A comprehensive study of such literature appears relevant to the task of ascertaining the exact position of the Shuʿūbīya.

5.3.1 The Foundation of the Shuʿūbīya in Literary Sources

Among the leading Shuʿūbī scholars are IbnʿAbd Rabbih and Mubarrad, each of whom demonstrated their hatred of the non-Arabs or mawālīs. IbnʿAbd Rabbih, for instance, wrote a chapter on the ʿaṣabīya for Arabs in his book, al-ʿIqd al-Farīd. Similarly, al-Mubarrad in al-Kāmil

⁴²⁸ Gibb, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, 62- 63.

⁴²⁹ *ibid.*, 66.

and al-Iṣḥānī in his book *al-Aghānī* recorded many examples that illustrated the hatred and repulsion the Arabs felt for the *mawālī*. Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih noted the habit among some Arabs of calling the *mawālī* by their first names and titles (because the use of the surname would have afforded them honour and respect), and their refusal to walk behind the *mawālī*. Nāfiʿ b. Jubayr b. Muṭʿam, one of the Arab nobles, prayed behind a *mawlā*. When questioned he replied that he intended to show humility to God by performing obligatory prayers behind a *mawlā*. Moreover, whenever someone died, Nāfiʿ is reported to have asked about the deceased person, and expressed his sorrow, regardless of who the deceased might have been (see also below). However, on learning of the death of a *mawlā*, he would declare his own submission to the authority of God, “who takes whomsoever He wants and leaves whomsoever He wants.”⁴³⁰

The Shuʿūbiya group was a reaction against the Arab aristocracy and arrogance. Many intellectuals and scholars appeared among the *mawālī*. They focused particularly on highlighting issues concerning the state and their Arab masters’ marginalisation of the subject class. The most important writings on this topic are those of Jāḥiẓ and Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, selected for this study for their appeal to many non-Arabs. The discourse of equality between the Arabs and non-Arabs became popular among the masses, while misunderstandings between Arabs and neo-Muslims gradually increased, causing continuous insurgency and uprisings against the Umayyad government, particularly in Iraq and Khurāsān. The Arab conquerors and their descendants did not in practice accept these non-Arabs’ claim of conversion to Islam and did not exempt them from the payment of the poll tax levied against all non-Muslims. Because of these discriminatory policies the *mawālīs* opposed the Arab rule of the Umayyads. Hakim argues that the distrust between the Arab aristocracy and the *mawālīs* was mutual; in particular the Arabs rejected the position of the Persian *mawālī* and continued to suppress them, calling them the enemies of Islam despite their conversion. On the other hand, the *mawālīs*’ struggle for equal rights continued without interruption, while the pious Arab Muslim scholars incited the *mawālī* to initiate a revolutionary campaign against the ruling Umayyads. In this way, the “Shuʿūbiyah quietly sowed dissident seeds of strategy in the fertile soil of oppression, producing a perennial harvest of

⁴³⁰Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *al-ʿIqd al-Farīd*, 63/2; al-Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil*, 312/2.

disloyalty against the Umayyad until at last the Abbasids had gathered sufficient strength to claim the crown.”⁴³¹

The mawālī played a vital role in Muslim socio-educational institutions. Arab scholars accepted the abilities of the mawālīs, conferring on them prestigious positions. However, some Arabs exhibited certain fanatical behaviours towards them. Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih records events suggesting the Arabs’ hatred of the mawālī, for example, in his account of a dialogue between Ibn Abī Laylā and ʿIsā b. Mūsā who used to criticize the mawālī ruthlessly. Mūsā b. ʿIsā asked Ibn Abī Laylā about the leading jurists of central cities of Muslims. Ibn Abī Laylā gave the names of Ḥasan b. Abī Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Muḥammad b. Sirīn in Baṣra; ʿAṭāʾ b. Abī Rubbāḥ, Mujāhid, Saʿīd b. Jubayr, and Sulaymān b. Yasār in Macca; Rabīʿa al-Rāyy and Ibn Abī Zanād in Qubā; Ṭāwūs, his son and Ibn Munabbah in Yemen, ʿAṭāʾ b. ʿAbd Allah al-Khurāsānī in Khurāsān; and Ibn Abī Laylā Makḥul in Syria, and commented that all of these were mawālīs. Mūsā became furious at this answer and asked about the leading jurists of Kūfā. Ibn Abī Laylā named Ibrāhīm and Shuʿbī, both Arabs. Then Mūsā b. ʿIsā praised God. Ibn Abī Laylā observed a sense of tranquillity in his face at this response, and reported that in his view al-Ḥakam b. ʿUṭaybah and ʿAmmār b. Abī Sulaymān were the great jurists of Kūfā, both of them mawālīs. However, he noticed that Mūsā was again very annoyed, and therefore he named Ibrāhīm and Shuʿbī.⁴³²

The sources that contain this report with a minor change are attributed to three different persons: (1) It was a dialogue between Ibn Abī Laylā and ʿIsā b. Mūsā as presented above; (2) it was a dialogue between Muḥammad b. Muslim b. Shihāb al-Zuhrī and ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān;⁴³³ and (3) it was a dialogue between Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik and one of his associates.⁴³⁴ However, the historical evidence does not support these three reports since, for example, almost identical dialogues appear in each, throwing doubt on their accuracy. The first report is between Ibn Abī Laylā and Mūsā b. ʿIsā. The date of the dialogue is not clear. Ibn Abī Laylā lived a long life,

⁴³¹ Hakim, ‘*Predestination*’, 208, passim. . 203-207.

⁴³² Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *al-ʿIqd al-Farīd*, 64/2.

⁴³³ For details cf. Al-Ḥākim al-Nisāburī, *Maʿrifah Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, 198-199; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Dimshaq*, 393-394/40; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓim*, 20-21/7; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, 82/20; al-Dhahabī, *Sayar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ*, 75-76, 88/5.

⁴³⁴ al-Sayyad al-Marʿashī, *Sharḥ Ihqāq al-Ḥaq*, 200-201/32.

approximately seventy-four years from 74AH to 148AH.⁴³⁵ Apparently, the dialogue took place when they were both mature and had established positions as jurists and scholars. It is therefore assumed that the dialogue took place when Ibn Abī Laylā was about forty years old, that is, around 114AH. The personalities outlined in the dialogue were Ibrāhīm al-Nakh^ʿī, a jurist of Kufā who died in 96 AH, and S^ʿid b. Jubayr, a jurist of Mecca who died in 95AH. At the time of this dialogue Ibn Abī Laylā was about 22 or 24 years old, and thus not yet an established scholar. Secondly, Ibn ^ʿAbd Rabbih cited Ibn Abī Zanād, a jurist of Qubā, as a contemporary of Ibrāhīm al-Nakh^ʿī and Sa^ʿid b. Jubayr, whereas he was born in 100AH, almost five years after the death of both. Thus, the report contains contradictory information and would thus appear to be a fabrication.⁴³⁶

The second and third reports both contain some similar and some conflicting points. The second report assumes that the dialogue was between Muḥammad b. Muslim b. Shihāb al-Zuhrī and ^ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān, while the third report tells us that the conversation was between Hishām b. ^ʿAbd al-Malik and an anonymous scholar. Both reports agree on the names of leading jurists of Mecca, Yemen, Syria, Jazira, Basra and Kūfa. However, there is a difference in the names of some other jurists of the cities.

According to the second report, the conversation was between ^ʿAbd al-Malik and Zuhri (51-124 AH). The latter, only fourteen years old at the beginning of ^ʿAbd al-Malik's rule, could not have been a mature scholar at the time. Secondly, he was not popular among Syrians during his life.⁴³⁷ Thirdly, Walīd b. Muḥammad al-Mūqarī (d. 181 or 182 AH) revealed this report to be from Zuhri. The historians and traditionalists (muḥaddithīn) are critics of al-Muqarī, questioning his reliability and painting him both as a weak reporter and a liar. Therefore, his reports ought to be rejected, particularly since his reports concerning al-Zuhri were baseless.⁴³⁸ The third report suggests that the dialogue took place at the beginning of the second century of hīgra during the reign of Hishām b. ^ʿAbd al-Malik i.e. from 105-125 AH. In this dialogue, Hishām is told by one of his anonymous

⁴³⁵ al-Dhahabī, *Siyara' lām al-nubalā'*, 458/6.

⁴³⁶ *ibid.*, 458/7.

⁴³⁷ ^ʿAbd Dixon, *al-Khilāfa Ummwīya*, 40.

⁴³⁸ al-Rāzī, *al-Jarḥ wa-al-Ta'dīl*, 15/9; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-Majrūhīn*, 76/3; al-Dārquṭnī, *ʿIlal al-Dārquṭnī*, 7/2; Abū Nuʿaymal-Iṣbahānī, *Kitāb al-Ḍuʿafāʾ*, 156; ^ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, 409/5.

companions that Ibrāhīm al-Nakh^ʿī is an eminent jurist of Kūfa and an Arab. On learning this last fact, Hishām feels some relief. This story, too, is apparently a fabrication because Ibrāhīm al-Nakh^ʿī died in 96 AH about ten years before the beginning of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik’s rule.⁴³⁹

The third report is drawn from different sources. Al-Dhahabī reveals that the dialogue was between a son of ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 65-86AH). He mentions that the conversation was between any one of ʿAbd al-Malik’s sons, however, the report does not specify the names of these sons. Four sons of ʿAbd Malik ruled during the Umayyad caliphate: al-Walīd (r. 86-96AH), Sulaymān (r. 96-99 AH), Yazīd (r. 101-105AH) and Hishām (r. 105-125AH). The time, place and the reporters are all anonymous in this report, a fact which calls into question its authenticity. Al-Marʿashī (d. 1471 AH) also relates this story without any solid chain of reporters.

All three reports share some commonalities, but their considerable contradictions validate the view that they are baseless and fabricated. Not only is their reliability questionable, but also their historicity and historical consistency is problematic. Furthermore, ʿAbd al-Malik and Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik are commonly considered to be the most judicious and prudent among the Umayyad rulers.⁴⁴⁰ This being the case, it would seem implausible openly to display hatred toward the mawālīs. This would overlook their significant positions in government institutions and in the population. Significantly, ʿAbd al-Malik married ladies of mawālī and had seven children by them. He also arranged the marriage of his son Walīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik with the daughter of Shah Farad b. Fayrūz. Al-Walīd had two sons with her: Yazīd and Ibrāhīm. The latter was very proud to be the son of a mawālī mother, and was given to declaring: “I am son of Kisra and my father is Marwān; Both Qayṣar and Khāqān are my grandfathers.”⁴⁴¹

It is hard to believe that the Umayyads became hostile towards the mawālī and non-Arabs, particularly when it is proved that they respected non-Arab mawālī scholars. For instance, they revered ʿAṭāʾ b. Abī Rabbāḥ more than any other Arab scholar. It was officially announced during

⁴³⁹ al-Dhahabī, *Sayar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, 426/5.

⁴⁴⁰ al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, 194/2; ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Ḥanbalī, *Shadhrāt al-Dhahab*, 165/1.

⁴⁴¹ al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 335/2; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 272/4; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 499/4; Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira*, 299/1; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh al-Khulafāʾ*, 252.

the Ḥajj that no one except °Aṭā° b. Abī Rubbaḥ ought to be consulted on religious matters.⁴⁴² Arab poets such as Farazdaq routinely criticised and degraded the non-Arabs. Whenever Farazdaq disparaged any of the prestigious men, he explained that he belonged to the mawālī and his Arab genealogy had not been proved. Farazdaq suggested that al-Muhallab b. Abī Ṣufra was not Arab and that he belonged to a nabṭī tribe.⁴⁴³

When °Alī b. Abī Ṭālib ascended to the caliphate he treated the mawālīs and Arabs equally, granting the mawālī an equal share in the salaries. He recruited thousands of soldiers from mawālī in his army, attracting criticism from nobles of Quraysh, who tried to persuade him to perpetuate the privileging of the Arabs over the mawālīs, which °Alī b. Abī Ṭālib refused to do. He argued that success could not be achieved with injustice, but this view was not widely accepted. Al-Ash°ath b. Qays rebuked °Alī's idea and accused him of establishing the authority of non-Arabs over his own (Arab) relatives.⁴⁴⁴

Ḥamdī Shāhīn argues that there were certain Arab groups who were involved in discriminatory behaviour towards the mawālīs, but these did not include the Umayyad government or its institutions.⁴⁴⁵ For instance, Shuraykh, one of the Persian mawālī, remained a judge in Kūfa from the time of °Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb until °Abd al-Malik's reign in 75AH while Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf was the governor of Kūfa.⁴⁴⁶ Similarly Sa°id b. Jubayr, a mawlā was appointed as Imām of obligatory prayers in Kūfa during the governorship of Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf. Later, al-Ḥajjāj killed him because of his involvement in the rebellion of Ibn Ash°ath. Ḥajjāj killed many Arabs and non-Arabs for this reason but he faced strong protest and criticism when he killed Sa°id because of the latter's knowledge and piety.⁴⁴⁷ Similarly, he was criticised for killing °Aṭā° b. Abī Rubbaḥ, the mawlā Imām of Mecca whom people consulted for religious guidance, as noted above. Ibn Khallakān

⁴⁴² al-Bukhārī, *Tārīkh al-Kabīr*, 464/6; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣifāh al-Ṣafwah*, 213/2; Ibn Khallakān, *Wafīyāt al-Ā°yān*, 13/3; Aḥmad Zakkī, Ṣafwat, *Jamharah Khutub al-°Arab*, 197-198/2.

⁴⁴³ Farazdaq: *Diwān Farazdaq*, (Paris: Adolphe Labitte, Libraire, 1870), 30-31.

⁴⁴⁴ Al-Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil*, 54/22; al-Dīnawarī, °AbdAllāh b. Muslim Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Imāmah wa-al-Siyāsah*, 145, 153/1.

⁴⁴⁵ Ḥamdī Shāhīn, *al-Dawla al-Umwīya*, p. 354.

⁴⁴⁶ al-Damīrī, *Ḥayāt al-Ḥaywān*, 19/1.

⁴⁴⁷ Aḥmad Amīn Misrī, *Ḍuḥa al-Islām*, 28/1.

recorded that it was officially announced during the ḥajj that people should consult ʿAṭāʾ for their religious matters because his opinion was appreciated. The respect given by the Umayyad authorities to ʿAṭā b. Abī Rubbāḥ shows that the mawālī acquired high positions during the era and that Arabs could accept the eminence of the mawālī based on their knowledge and piety.⁴⁴⁸

The authenticity traditions suggesting mawālī inferiority seem fragile. Such traditions may be classified into three categories: firstly, a lucid elaboration of mawālī marginal status during the Umayyad period. Most of these traditions are incorrect and baseless. The second category consists of those traditions not actually related to the Umayyad period although correlated by many scholars to the era; most of these were compiled during the Rāshidūn or ʿAbbāsīd periods. The weakness of the first two traditions is evident; however the third category consists of inaccurate, ambiguous and vague traditions wrongly attributed to the Umayyad period. Traditions that concern anti-mawālī discrimination during the Umayyad period can generally be found in Arabic literature rather than in historical books. Some important sources are as follows:

1. Al-Biyān wa-al-Tabyīn by Jāḥiẓ, ʿUmar b. Baḥr (d. 255AH)
2. Al-Kāmil by Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-Mubarrad (d. 286AH)
3. Al-ʿIqd al-Farīd by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih al-Andlusī, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad (d. 328AH)
4. Al-Aghānī by Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī (d. 356AH)
5. Muḥāḍrāt al-Udabāʾ by Iṣbahānī (d. 502AH)⁴⁴⁹

These are well-known books of Arabic literature but the authenticity of their accounts and the soundness of historical events have not been confirmed. As such, they are unreliable and should be evaluated critically. Secondly, their authenticity is also uncertain and the narrative is inconsistent because these books were compiled under the ʿAbbāsīds long after the Umayyad period. Al-Rāghib al-Iṣbahānī copied from Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih's al-ʿIqd al-Farīd and failed to make any additions or offer any explanations of the work. Thirdly, most of these kinds of narrations consist of a single report and therefore their veracity cannot be regarded as sound. Furthermore,

⁴⁴⁸ Ibn Khallkān, *Wafīyyāt al-Aʿyān*, 261/1.

⁴⁴⁹ Jāḥiẓ, ʿUmar b. Baḥr, *Al-Biyān wa-al-Tabyīn* by ed: Fūzī ʿAṭwī, (Beirut: Dār Ṣuʿb, n.d.); al-Mubarrad, *Al-Kāmil* by (d. 286AH); Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *Al-ʿIqd al-Farīd*; Iṣbahānī, *Al-Aghānī*.

these traditions were compiled during the anti-Umayyad Abbasid rule that was very hostile towards the Arabs; they depicted the Umayyads as the enemy of the mawālī. Such sources contain reports which indicate that the mawālī were suppressed and treated unjustly during the Umayyad period. Some of these reports are analysed below to show their fabrication and to identify the level of hostility to the Umayyads.

For example, Nāfi[°] b. Jubayr was one of the family members of the tribe of Nawfal b. [°]Abd Munāf. As noted above, whenever someone died, he used to ask about him. If he was told that the deceased was a Qurayshī, he used to say: “it is a great loss for his tribe”. And if the deceased person was an Arab, he used to say: “it is a great loss for his city. And if he was told that the deceased person was a mawlā or a non-Arab. He used to say: “O God, they are your servants; you may take whosoever you want and leave whosoever you desire.”⁴⁵⁰ Mubarrad reported the account. Further, Ibn [°]Abd Rabbih (d. 328 AH) narrated this tradition in his *al-[°]Iqd al-Farīd* and *al-Rāghibal-Iṣbahānī* (d. 502 AH) in his *Muḥāḍrāt al-Uḍabā[°]*.⁴⁵¹ Nevertheless, some key points are missing from this report. For example, neither the time and nor the place are mentioned. Nāfi[°] a b. Jubayr is the only identifiable person in the text since, according to the historical sources, he died in 99AH.⁴⁵² Therefore, he lived during the Umayyad period until the end of Sulaymān b. [°]Abd al-Malik’s rule but it is not clear when and where this event took place, although Nāfi[°] had travelled during his life in Mecca, Medina, Syria and Irāq.⁴⁵³ Secondly, the mawālī considered Nāfi[°] a pious and religious person who was regularly consulted for his opinion on religious matters.⁴⁵⁴ On the topic of respect for a deceased person, he is reported to have said: “Whosoever participates in a funeral not for the respect of the deceased person, rather to show his presence for the relatives of the deceased person, he should not join the funeral ceremony.”⁴⁵⁵ This suggests that he was humane. Inherently, the report has many flaws, given its lack of historical consistency as well as its non-historian narrator.

⁴⁵⁰ Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil*, 137/5.

⁴⁵¹ Ibn [°]Abd Rabbih, *al-[°]Iqd al-Farīd*, 260-261/3; al-Rāghib al-Iṣbahānī, *Muḥāḍrāt al-Uḍabā[°]*, 421/1.

⁴⁵² [°]Abd al-Ḥayī al-Ḥanbalī, *Shadhrāt al-Dhahab*, 116/1; al-Dhahabī, *Sayar[°]Alām al-Nubālā[°]*, 543/4; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyawa-al-Nihāya*, 186/9.

⁴⁵³ al-Dhahabī, *Sayar[°]Alām al-Nubālā[°]*, 541-543/4.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Thiqāt*, 267/5; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, 276/29; Ibn[°]Asākir, *TārīkhDimashaq*, 401-408/61; al-Dhahabī, *Sayar[°]Alām al-Nubālā[°]*, 542-543/4.

⁴⁵⁵ al-Dhahabī, *Sayar[°]Alām al-Nubālā[°]*, 542/4.

Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih who wrote literary works and was inclined towards the Khārijī doctrine informed us of this report. The Khawārij were known to be hostile towards the Umayyad.⁴⁵⁶

In addition, Ziyād b. Abīh reveals that Muʿāwīya discussed the issue of the mawālī with al-Aḥnaf b. Qays and Samurah b. Jundub. Muʿāwīya highlighted his concern at the alarming increase in the number of non-Arabs, and his fear that they would attack the king and the Arabs. Muʿāwīya contemplated killing half of them and leaving the other half for trade and other duties. He then asked al-Aḥnaf and Samurah for their opinion. Al-Aḥnaf replied that it did not please him to kill his own mother, uncle and the mawālī since the non-Arabs were now their relatives and part of their family. Then Samurah b. Jundub responded that he would have proposed a better solution. Muʿāwīya then concluded the meeting, asking for time to think about the matter. Al-Aḥnaf reports that he left the meeting with a heart full of worry and tension. However, the next day Muʿāwīya was resolved to accept al-Aḥnaf’s opinion, and rejected Samurah b. Jundub’s suggestion. This report is cited only by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih.⁴⁵⁷ Al-Rāghib al-Iṣbahānī also documented this report with some modification.⁴⁵⁸ Analysis of this report requires consideration from several angles. The event took place during Muʿāwīya’s rule but the exact date is not mentioned. The event shows that the mawālī had gained such importance during Umayyad rule that the Arab rulers were pressed to consider a policy to limit their numbers. There is a significant difference between Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih’s and Iṣbahānī’s reports. According to the former the dialogue was between Muʿāwīya, al-Aḥnaf and Samurah b. Jundub, while the latter narrates the dialogue as having occurred between Ziyād b. Abīh and al-Aḥnaf; but again, the report does not mention the date of the dialogue. Furthermore, the report lacks many primary elements that would give the document status. It appears only in Arabic literature, which does not guarantee its historical consistency. Additionally, the number of the mawālī was not high enough to make them a threat to Arabs. Given these facts, it can be argued that the report is baseless and full of exaggeration. The number of mawālī were not more than twenty thousand during the reign of Muʿāwīya as al-Daynūrī claimed.⁴⁵⁹ In addition

⁴⁵⁶ ʿAbd al-Amir Ḥusayn Dixon, *al-Khilāfah al-Umwiya*, p. 52; Al-Badrāwī, Rīyāḍ ʿAbd al-Ḥussayn, *Al-Mawqif al-Umwi*, pp. 13-14.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *al-Iqd al-Farīd*, 361/3.

⁴⁵⁸ al-Rāghib al-Iṣbahānī, *Muḥaḍḍarāt al-Udabāʾ*, 425/1.

⁴⁵⁹ Al-Daynūrī, *al-Akbār al-Ṭiwāl*, 293; al-Kharbūṭlī, *Tārīkh al-ʿIrāq fī Zil al-Ḥukam al-Umwi*, 254.

al-Daynūrī is criticised because his information is based on Persian sources that had a tendency to overplay the importance of the mawālīs in their writings.⁴⁶⁰ Their number had increased during the rule of al-Walīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 86-96) but many mawālī were appointed to key positions during Umayyad rule.⁴⁶¹ This kind of report, lacking any logical or historical consistency and reliability, may thus confidently be taken as fabricated, having appeared in the literature long after Muʿāwīya’s rule and lacking a reliable chain of transmitters.

Finally, Arabic literature features some traditions that demonstrate hatred of the mawālī. Mostly, these apply to the Umayyad rule. However, careful reading may reveal these reports to have been wrongly attributed to the Umayyad era. In fact, they belong to the pre-Umayyad or post-Umayyad period. For instance, Mubarrad, reporting on the authority of al-Aṣmaʿī, said that he had listened to an Arab talking with another Arab: “Do you think that these non-Arabs will get married with the Arab ladies in paradise?” The second one replied: “I think so because Allah may reward them because of their good deeds,” The first one then asserted: “before such reward we wish to be killed.”⁴⁶² Al-Rāghib al-Iṣbahānī also reports this event.⁴⁶³ However, neither al-Rāghib nor al-Mubarrad mention the date of the event nor describe the person whose exchange they discussed. Only al-Aṣmaʿī who listened to the dialogue is identifiable. It is proved that al-Aṣmaʿī was born in 122AH and died circa 215AH,⁴⁶⁴ and that consequently al-Aṣmaʿī was only ten years old when the Umayyad dynasty disintegrated. This means that the report appeared during the overtly anti-Umayyad ʿAbbāsīd period. Furthermore the report notably lacks a chain of reporters. As such, the report may be considered unreliable and inauthentic. Similarly, Badīʿ Sharīf’s location of this episode during Umayyad rule can also be considered inaccurate.⁴⁶⁵ It seems such reports mostly consist of individual opinion, and that in some cases the transmitters and reporters are anonymous and the time and place omitted. Therefore, any conclusion drawn from these reports is misleading. Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih for example devotes an entire chapter to the reports containing anti-mawālī

⁴⁶⁰ Dixen, *al-Khilāfa al-umwīya*, 16.

⁴⁶¹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 264/3; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 354, 372/3; Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*, 24/3.

⁴⁶² Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil*, 1375.

⁴⁶³ Al-Raghib al-Iṣbahānī, *Muhāḍrat al-Uḍabāʾ*, 425/1.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Thiqāt*, 389/8; ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, 177/1.

⁴⁶⁵ Badīʿ Sharīf, *al-Ṣurrāʿ bayna al-Mawālī wa-al-ʿArab*, 28.

prejudices.⁴⁶⁶ In fact the mawālīs' situation was not the same in all the provinces of the Umayyad caliphate. For instance there is no evidence that Syrian mawālī were maltreated or considered to be second-class citizens of the state. Similarly, the mawālī from Andalusia enjoyed their position in society, since they owned a great deal of property and vast tracts of land and remained very powerful.⁴⁶⁷ The Umayyads were hostile towards their Hāshimid relatives rather than the Arabs. However, the tribal conflict between the Qays and Yemens contributed hugely to the caliphate's eventual disintegration.

Most Orientalists and other scholars accept reports about the mawālī without the necessary critical analysis, and in many cases also ignore the historical significance of the sources. Most of the reports have been extracted from literature for which historical reliability cannot be confirmed, and are also weak in terms of logic and objectivity. Documents that reflect prejudice against the mawālī mostly take the form of poetry; this genre is very modest in comparison with the amount of poetry produced by Arabs who railed against their fellow Arabs. Similarly, there is not a single exclusive qaṣīda written against the mawālī during the Umayyad period.⁴⁶⁸ In addition, sources document the existence of twenty-one mawālī poets in that period, with not one composing poetry that opposed the Arabs.⁴⁶⁹

On the other hand, Arab poets produced many qaṣā'id against their contemporary Arab fellows. The reports that discriminate against the mawālī during the Umayyad era are, as mentioned above, found in literary works of the time and are narrated by prominent writers; all of them have been collected and analysed by Al-Badrāwī, the main sources of these kinds of reports, in the following percentages: approximately 20% by al-Mubarrad; 13% by al-Rāghib al-Iṣbahānī (who extracted 20% of Mubarrad's reports in his books: apart from these reports his contribution is 13%, so cumulatively al-Rāghib al-Iṣbahānī's share is 33%); 33% by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih; and 20% by Abū al-Farj al-Iṣfahānī.⁴⁷⁰ The above discussion recounts the portrayal of non-Arab or mawālī in the

⁴⁶⁶ Ibn ʿAbdRabbih, *Al-ʿAqd al-Farīd*, 360-363/3.

⁴⁶⁷ ʿAbd al-Wāḥid Dhunūn Ṭaha, *al-Faṭḥ wa-al-Istimrār al-Arabī fī Shimāl Africa and al-Andalus*, 416-418.

⁴⁶⁸ ʿAlī Maẓhar, *al-ʿAṣbiya ʿinda al-ʿArab*, 66-83.

⁴⁶⁹ JurjīZadan, *Tārīkh ʿĀdāb al-Lughā al-ʿArabīya*, 241/1.

⁴⁷⁰ al-Badrāwī, *Rīyāḍ ʿAbd al-Ḥussayn*, *Al-Mawqif al-Umwī*, 88-89.

pre-modern sources of Arabic literature. The pre-Modern historical sources feature less hostile mawālī-related traditions. However, some modern scholars, perhaps overly influenced by Arabic literary sources, have presented the mawālī as a marginalized segment of early Muslim society particularly during the Umayyad rule.

5.4 The Role of the Mawālī in the ‘Abbāsīd Revolution

This section analyses divergent narratives in modern and pre-modern sources on the mawālīs’ role in the collapse of the Umayyads. Modern scholarship analyses the ethnic identity of the Revolution. The leading scholars analysing the mawālīs’ role fall broadly into two clear groups: the traditionalists and the revisionists, although a variety of opinions exists within each group. The traditionalist interpretation gained wider acceptance during the first half of the twentieth century, while the revisionists tended to dominate the second half. Traditionalists highlight the significant role of the mawālīs in the fall of the Umayyads, whereas the revisionists see the mawālī as playing a marginal and secondary role under the Arabs. Notable among the traditionalist-leaning scholars are Kremer, van Vloten, Goldziher and Wellhausen, while the revisionist school includes Dennett, Gibb, Shaban, Zakeri, Crone, and Agha. A comparative study of the respective narratives of the modern scholars will help in determining whether, how, and to what degree the mawālī were instrumental in the Umayyads’ downfall.

5.4.1 Modern Sources on the Role of Mawālī in the Fall of the Umayyads

5.4.1.1 Traditionalist Interpretations

Kremer leads the traditional school of thought. He has written extensively on the relationship of the various strata of Muslim society after the expansion of the Muslim empire to non-Arab areas. Goldziher admires Kremer’s contribution, while admitting the comparatively small contribution of his own work to Kremer’s already extensively-researched material.⁴⁷¹ In Goldziher’s view, “the Muslim teaching of equality of all men in Islam remained a dead letter for a long time, never realized in the consciousness of Arabs, and roundly denied in their day to day behaviour.”⁴⁷² He

⁴⁷¹ Goldziher, Ignaz, *Muslim Studies*, 101.

⁴⁷² *ibid.*, 98.

maintains that the Arab notion of non-Arabs contradicted Islam's teachings, and that Arab hostility to non-Arabs did not occur in the pre-Islamic period. Such sentiment emerged and fomented in the later era when Arabs started wars against the Persians. Aristocratic Arab prejudice forced their acceptance of the equality of the non-Arab *mawālī*. Goldziher observes that a non-Arab counter-reaction appeared when their established noble families, known in Muslim chronicle sources as *dihqāns*, became part of the Muslim society. Rejecting the putative supremacy of the Arabs, they affirmed their own collective pride.⁴⁷³ Their intellectual contributions to Muslim society meanwhile uplifted the social status of the non-Arabs.

These proud Persian and non-Arab intellectuals and skilful workers acquired high positions only when the ʿAbbāsids came into power. Kremer suggests that scientific studies of the Qurʾān, exegesis, ḥadīth and fiqh were mainly carried out by *mawālī* during the first two centuries,⁴⁷⁴ which in turn indicates the *mawālīs*' significance in the development of Islam's role. Goldziher cites many literary references, such as al-Aghānī and al-ʿIqd al-Farīd in order to explain the social relationship of the Arabs and *mawālī*. He maintains that al-Ḥajjāj was a fanatical enemy of the *mawālī*. Only with great difficulty could the *mawālī* change their patron, and in the case of any violation, they were disciplined by customary law.⁴⁷⁵ In this context, both Kremer and Goldziher maintain that the Khawārij attracted the *mawālī* because of their protest against the rigid tribal affiliation and rejection of the Quraysh's claim over the legitimacy of leadership. Goldziher, following Kremer's lead, notes that the *mawālī* joined the Khawārij because they called for their basic human rights, while the link he draws between the Shuʿūbiya and the struggle for equal rights is also worth noting. Qurānic teaching clearly affirms the equality of all *qabāʾil* (tribes) and *shuʿūb* (people),⁴⁷⁶ and the Shuʿūbiya gradually reached its pinnacle in the second and third century of *higra* when the non-Arabs condemned the racial arrogance of Arabs and demanded complete equality. Goldziher observes:

⁴⁷³ *ibid.*, 104.

⁴⁷⁴ *ibid.*, 105.

⁴⁷⁵ *ibid.*, 131-132.

⁴⁷⁶ The Qurānic verse describes the equality of all *qabāʾil* and *shuʿūb*. Some philologists use *qabāʾil* for Arab tribes and *shuʿūb* for all non-Arabs.

the favour which outstanding Persian families enjoyed at the ʿAbbāsīd court, and the great influence which they had in the government of Islam, encouraged the Persians and their friends to express openly their long-suppressed resentment of Arab racial arrogance...A good observer characterized (and he was possibly not the first to do so) the relation of the Umayyad and the ʿAbbāsīd dynasties by calling the first an Arab and the latter an ʿAjamī or Khurāsānian empire.⁴⁷⁷

Van Vloten extends Kremer's argument further, presenting a cultural-economic interpretation of Umayyad decline. He maintains that the Arabs did not treat their conquered subjects (converted non-Arabs) as equals, a situation which pushed the mawālī of Khurāsān to support the Shiʿī agents calling for the equality of all Muslims. Van Vloten argues that the Shiʿī successfully achieved their goal with the assistance of non-Arabs who desired equal socio-political and military rights.⁴⁷⁸ He further asserts that the hatred nursed by oppressed Persians and Shiʿīs and the anticipation of a Messiah provided elements crucial to a Revolution.⁴⁷⁹

Wellhausen meanwhile agrees with Van Vloten that the mawālī were not properly recognised by the Arabs, and highlights their secondary position in both military and social life. For instance they were appointed only as rank and file in the army, receiving pay and a share in the spoils but no formal recognition, while their names were omitted from the diwān, the military pension-list. They were not exempt from the subject-tax even if they converted to Islam. He argues that the converted Iranians were not treated as equals, which provoked their resentment. Here Islam's doctrine of racial and tribal equality provided them with a foundation for resistance. He notes: "Islam itself was the ground upon which they began the struggle against the Umayyads. It was Islam that united them with those Arabs who, following theocratic principles, opposed the Umayyid government. It was Arabs who first roused and organised the Mawālī."⁴⁸⁰ Wellhausen extensively analyses the reforms of ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz regarding the mawālī who were not exempted from paying tax. He states that a great number of converted non-Arabs of Kufa and Basra started a struggle for

⁴⁷⁷ Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 137.

⁴⁷⁸ Dennett, *Marwān*, 5 in preface

⁴⁷⁹ *ibid.*, 5; Dennett, *Khurāsān*, 60. n. 3.

⁴⁸⁰ Wellhausen, *Arab Kingdom*, 497-498.

equal rights and that “Islam made them alive to their claims, and they sought to obtain full equal rights.”⁴⁸¹ Gathering under the leadership of Mukhtār, they continued struggling for their rights.

Wellhausen also observes that the Arab character of army and government towns was significantly changed and that the non-Arabs gained significant positions until the rule of ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz.⁴⁸² The increasing Islamisation of the conquered compelled ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz to address the grievances of mawālī by conferring equal rights on them. By devising a policy of reconciliation, he attempted to eliminate the animosity between the Irāqīs and Syrians and between Arabs and mawālī.⁴⁸³ He also attempted to satisfy the Khawārij and ʿAlids by entering into their argument and the Alids by restoring their confiscated property to them and prohibiting the curse upon ʿAlī.⁴⁸⁴ According to Wellhausen’s assessment, Umayyad decline occurred as a result of the Khurāsān Shiʿīs’s growing might.⁴⁸⁵ The majority of Abū Muslim Khurāsānī’s adherents were Iranians from the peasant class and the mawālī of the villages of Marv. Wellhausen further identifies the importance of Arab settlers in the revolutionary army.⁴⁸⁶

This appreciation of Arab settlers’ role in resistance stands in marked contrast to Van Vloten’s view. Wellhausen argues that, “there were Arabs among them also who mostly occupied leading

⁴⁸¹ *ibid.*, 278.

⁴⁸² *ibid.*, 279.

⁴⁸³ *ibid.*, 309 Note: Gibb writes: “The crisis in the fortunes of the Arabs state and of the dynasty which coincided with his succession (and which may have been the reason for his nomination by Sulaymān) called for urgent measures of reform. Under the influence of the developing religious thought, he attempted to meet this demand by reversing the policy of putting the state and its interests first, which had been initiated by his predecessors. He was, therefore, primarily interested in the religious aspects of reform, but these were bound up with the political efforts to prevent the imminent breakdown of the Islamic state by (i) maintaining the unity of Arabs; (ii) removing the grievances of the mawālī; and (iii) reconciling political life with the claims of religion.” (Gibb, *Rescript*, 1)

⁴⁸⁴ Wellhausen, *Arab Kingdom*, 309, 310.

⁴⁸⁵ *ibid.*, 397.

⁴⁸⁶ *ibid.*, 532. Note that Bernard Lewis also largely agrees with the assertion made by Wellhausen on the issue of the mawālī. He argues that Abū Muslim mainly attracted the Persian mawālī, and the Yemenite Arabs. He further states “An active war-like Persian population, imbued with the religious and military traditions of the frontier, was deeply resentful of the inequalities imposed by Umayyad rule. The Arab army and settlers, half Persianized by long residence, were sharply divided among themselves, and even during the triumphal progress of Abū Muslim diverted their own energies and those of Naṣr ibn Sayyār to Arab inter-tribe strife” (B. Lewis, ‘Abbasids’, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition, (Leiden, 1954).

positions.”⁴⁸⁷ In fact Wellhausen revises Van Vloten’s purely racial interpretation, extending consideration to this previously neglected group. However in relation to the role of Shi‘īs and the predominance of Persian agents in the Revolution, his position more closely resembles that of Van Vloten. Thus, the whole story of the revolution is depicted as a struggle to overthrow Umayyad rule in favour of a cosmopolitan Islamic state. Dennett also notes the influence of Wellhausen’s interpretation, noting that it “became the standard interpretation of early Islamic history” for more than half of the twentieth century.⁴⁸⁸

5.4.1.2 The Revisionist School

In contrast to the traditionalists, the revisionists present various narratives regarding the role of mawālī in the fall of the Umayyads. The leading scholars of this school of thought include Dennett, Gibb, Shaban, Zakeri, Crone and Agha. Foremost among this group is Dennett who, in 1939, disagreed with many of the assertions and claims of Van Vloten and Wellhausen regarding the ethnic identity of groups struggling against Umayyad rule.⁴⁸⁹ Dennett considers that the successful overthrow of the Arab Kingdom would have been inconceivable without the active opposition of the Arabs. Rejecting Van Vloten’s emphasis on the non-Arabs’ crucial contribution to Umayyad decline, he instead suggests that Arab internal conflicts played a greater role. His argument is based on the fact that only Arabs possessed the requisite military strength to overthrow this empire.⁴⁹⁰ He considers that Van Vloten and Wellhausen exaggerated the social and religious factors in their assertions, proposing instead that such socio-religious factors were “certainly the occasion, but not the cause, for the final victory of the Abbasids.”⁴⁹¹

Also prominent in the revisionist school is Gibb, who argues that the role of the mawālī in the revolution was limited. He records that “the tradition of enthusiasm of the Iranian for Abū Muslim is true only of the period after his success. In our most authentic records there is no trace of a mass

⁴⁸⁷ Wellhausen, *Arab Kingdom*, 489.

⁴⁸⁸ Dennett, ‘*Khurāsān*’, n. 3.

⁴⁸⁹ *ibid.*, 60; Shaban, ‘*Abbāsīd Revolution*’, xiii.

⁴⁹⁰ Dennett, *Marwān*, 12 in preface., 285.

⁴⁹¹ *ibid.*, 6 in preface.

movement such as has so often been portrayed.”⁴⁹² Gibb mainly analyses the role of mawālī in the context of the Shu‘ūbiya movement. However, Shaban extends Dennett’s thesis in his magnum opus, *‘Abbāsīd Revolution*, arguing that the Arab settlers were the most important element involved in attempts to overthrow Umayyad rule. Through analysis of the socio-economic position of the ‘Arab settlers’ in Khurāsān, Shaban attempts to establish the decisive role of the Arab settlers in the military movement of the Revolution.⁴⁹³

Shaban reassesses the issue in more detail, finding that although there were some mawālī in Khurāsān among Abū Muslim’s followers, his main support came from the Arab quarters in Marv, that is, from the Arab settlers. As this thesis has shown, this was the section of Marv’s population that was opposed to the Umayyad policies which showed no concern with their interests. Thus they were not only deprived of the advantages of the Arab-born, but were also left under the authority of the dihqāns and were treated even worse than the conquered people.⁴⁹⁴ Shaban argues that Naṣr b. Sayyār put some effort into addressing their grievances, but it was too late to reconcile them to Umayyad rule. This prompted a complete change, not only in Khurāsān but throughout the whole empire. Abū Muslim’s call to empower the House of the Prophet for the sake of justice inspired them to revolt against the Umayyad regime. The martyrdom of the Shī‘ite Imām Yaḥyā ibn Zayd in Khurāsān in 125/743 at the hands of Naṣr b. Sayyār prepared the Arab settlers to stand against the ‘old regime’. Shaban maintains that “it was towards these Settlers that the Hāshimīya propaganda campaign was directed. The Hāshimīya missionaries to Merv must have realized that they provided the most fertile ground for recruiting supporters for the revolutionary movement.”⁴⁹⁵

The mawālī, it would seem, gradually assumed ever greater importance during this period and their role can be observed in the movements of the Dhakwāniyya, the Maqāmiṣa and ‘Abd Allah b. Mu‘āwīya. The reception of ‘Abd Allah b. Mu‘āwīya among the mawālī and non-Arabs is significant since it provided elements necessary for the Khurāsānian revolution. All three elements (the Dhakwāniyya, the Maqāmiṣa, and ‘Abd Allah b. Mu‘āwīya) combined to create the conditions

⁴⁹² Gibb, *Arab Conquests*, 94.

⁴⁹³ Shaban, *Abbasid Revolution*, 155-157.

⁴⁹⁴ *ibid.*, 156.

⁴⁹⁵ Shaban, *Islamic History*, 157.

under which the mawālī gained prominence. Sulaymān b. Hishām's army, the Dhakwānīya, consisted of mawālī who played a vital role in convincing some of the jund of Ḥimṣ and Palestine who considered that the coup d'état against Walīd II was illegal.⁴⁹⁶

Meanwhile, the maqāmiṣa, the Egyptian naval forces, were enlisted in the dīwān of Egypt and were referred to in the sources as maqāmiṣa and mawālī.⁴⁹⁷ The Syrians had a small navy but always relied upon Egyptian naval forces, especially during the sieges of Constantinople. Although the Egyptian naval forces were Christians they worked for the Arabs to ensure a share in the booty.⁴⁹⁸ Generally, the Egyptian maqāmiṣa and the mawālī served Arab interests, with the exception of a minor unrest during the reign of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik. Since the non-Arab and non-Muslim forces promoted their interests, the Umayyads utilised and paid them a handsome share in the spoils. Shaban remarks that "It is the only clear case in this period of a very large number of non-Muslims and non-Arabs being allowed to perform a task of paramount importance in the empire's defence, and they performed it very well."⁴⁹⁹

Yazīd III's new policies attracted the Egyptian maqāmiṣa and mawālī and about 30,000 Egyptians were granted stipends from the dīwān. Yazīd III also enlisted the Egyptian mawālī and maqāmiṣa into the armed and naval forces on a permanent basis on condition that they accepted Islam. In so doing, Yazīd relieved the pressure on the Syrian army engaged in North Africa and Andalusia. On the other hand, the mawālī and maqāmiṣa gained a significant position in Egypt's Arab army. However, the situation was more complex in Iraq and Khurāsān where the mawālī, given their diverse affiliations, played divergent roles. Some of them were linked with the Khawārij while others were close allies of the Umayyads, such as the Dhakwānīya. The non-Arabs of Iraq and Khurāsān were closely associated with the Shi'ī movements, and it seems that the role of the mawālī became more coherent after Marwān b. Muḥammad ascended to the throne in 744/127.⁵⁰⁰ Under the leadership of Sulaymān b. Hishām, the Dhakwānīya gathered against Marwān b.

⁴⁹⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 255, 281/4.

⁴⁹⁷ Kindī, *Governors*, 84.

⁴⁹⁸ Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 331/3; Shaban, *Islamic History*, 123.

⁴⁹⁹ Shaban, *Islamic History*, 123.

⁵⁰⁰ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 280/4

Muḥammad. However, they could not resist his forces and fled to Kūfa where they joined the Khawārij.⁵⁰¹ At that time the governor of Kufa was ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar, appointed by Yazīd III. Since ʿAbd Allah refused to accept Marwān b. Muḥammad's authority he made successful alliances with other dissident elements and enlisted a sizable army with the help of the treasury in Kufa.

Observing the internal conflict in the Umayyad royal family, the anti-Umayyad Shiʿīs mobilised around ʿAbd Allah b. Muʿāwīya, a grandson of a brother of ʿAlī.⁵⁰² However, he was defeated by ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar's army. ʿAbd Allah b. Muʿāwīya fled to Madāʾīn, where he successfully organized his army of mawālī. Shaban argues that although the mawālī supported ʿAbd Allah b. Muʿāwīya, their support should not be overestimated, particularly when it lost its strength during the first encounter with Marwān's army.⁵⁰³ On the other hand, the situation in Kufa was challenging in that ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar consolidated his strength by forming an alliance with the Khawārij under the leadership of Ḍaḥḥāk, and the Dhakwānīya under the leadership of Sulaymān b. Hishām.⁵⁰⁴ These tribal and mawālī alliances were the most evident features of the joint forces that together attacked and captured Mawṣil. Marwān II retaliated, defeating them, while their leader Ḍaḥḥāk was killed in the battle in 746/128.⁵⁰⁵

The dispersed army again assembled in Khurāsān where ʿAbd Allah b. Muʿāwīya was gathering more momentum with the support of the Iranian mawālī. Sulaymān b. Hishām with his mawālī, Maṣṣūr b. Jamḥūr with his Syrian army, and Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr with his supporters joined ʿAbd Allah b. Muʿāwīya in Khurāsān.⁵⁰⁶ This was the beginning of a well-organized struggle against Marwān II. Shabān argues that “the pseudo-Shiʿite movement of ʿAbd Allah b. Muʿāwīya had come to be a Shiʿite-Khārijite-Marwānid-ʿAbbāsīd movement.”⁵⁰⁷ These various forces were united against Marwān II but could not devise a common ideology upon which to stage a successful

⁵⁰¹ *ibid.*, 283/4.

⁵⁰² *ibid.*, 285/4.

⁵⁰³ Shaban, *Islamic History*, 161-162.

⁵⁰⁴ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 289/2.

⁵⁰⁵ *ibid.*, 300/4.

⁵⁰⁶ *ibid.*, 315-317/4.

⁵⁰⁷ Shaban, *Islamic History*, 163.

struggle. Their struggle against Marwān's forces lasted about two years but the latter destroyed their power. The leaders were killed or fled to the remote corners of the empire; ʿAbd Allah b. Muʿāwīya was murdered in 746/129; Manṣūr b. Jamhūr fled to India, and the Abbasid Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr returned with his two uncles to Palestine. The movement had apparently failed to achieve its targets but it inspired the people of Khurāsān and the mawālī to challenge Umayyad authority.⁵⁰⁸

Sharon extends Shaban's argument, supporting many of his claims while refuting those of Van Vloten and Wellhausen.⁵⁰⁹ Employing new sources, particularly the Akhbār al-Dawlah, he argues that the Arab settlers in Khurāsān formed a very active class that joined the muqātila (fighting army) to overthrow Umayyad rule. However, Sharon classifies the Khurāsānian Arabs into settlers and muqātila.⁵¹⁰ Similarly, Zakeri claims that Āzādān (small independent landlords and warriors who had a lower position in the Sāsānid Empire) played a significant role in the disintegration of the Umayyad caliphate. He argues:

The Arab tribal-military-class replaced the Sāsānid warriors, although the latter maintained cohesiveness long after the establishment of Islam. Survival of these warriors and the problems involved in adjusting to the new circumstances were constant sources of disorder and destabilization for the Umayyad administration. ...many of [the mawālī were] Iranian armed forces who were partially disarmed in ʿIrāq, but in Khurāsān remained intact... the underprivileged among them swelled the ranks of the Shiʿī and Khārījī rebels. As the ʿAbbāsīd propaganda spread in Khurāsān, the local Persian nobility with its armed militia gave support to them and regained some of its lost privileges.⁵¹¹

Crone studies the role of the mawālī extensively, tracing them from their emergence in the early period of conquest to the formation of mamlūk institutions in the ʿAbbāsīd period. Her work is an

⁵⁰⁸ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 316/4.

⁵⁰⁹ Sharon, Moshe, “ *The Advent of ʿAbbāsīds*, PhD thesis, (The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1970), xxi-xli, esp. xxx.

⁵¹⁰ Sharon, *Black Banners*, passim; idem, *Revolt*, passim.

⁵¹¹ Zakeri, Mohsen, ‘Sāsānid Soldiers in Early Muslim Society: The Origins of ʿAyyārān Futuwwa’, (Wiesbaden Harrasowitz Verlag, 1955), 11.

attempt to understand the role of the mawālī as a military institution. She identifies three stages in the development of the Muslim army. The Arab military aristocracy lasted until the ʿAbbāsīd revolution, led by an army recruited from Khurāsān and Transoxania which served during the first hundred years of ʿAbbāsīd rule, while in the third stage, al-Muʿtaṣim delegated military power to men recruited as slaves. Crone's work seeks to identify the ways in which the Arab settlement outside the Arabian Peninsula affected the tribal organisation in the process of conquest, as well as the nature of relations between Arabs and non-Arabs. She argues that tribalism or ʿaṣabīya was the most prominent feature during the Umayyad period, and that non-Arabs were attached to Arab tribes with both playing active as well as passive roles in the conflicts with the Arabs themselves.⁵¹² Crone attempts to identify the role and identity of the mawālī in Arab factionalism, constructing the role of the mawālī as auxiliary during the Umayyad period, while their identity as clients was closely interlinked with that of their Arab masters. Her dismissal of traditional interpretations is evident in her work; she suggests the number of mawālī is exaggerated in the modern sources and their role is depicted as one of the significant factors in the fall of the Umayyads.

Agha also evaluates the elements contributing to the fall of the Umayyads. By using quantitative and source critical methodologies, he revisits all post-Wellhausen works, criticising prominent scholars of the revisionist school. He further argues that while sources not accessible to Wellhausen did provide some extra information on an event, their significance is minimal. Consequently, he considers the information on the subject provided by al-Ṭabarī as still valid, while Wellhausen is viewed as ever-vibrant, even for those who disagree with him. Agha moreover acknowledges the distinct Wellhausen influence on his own work.

Agha identifies three types of non-Arab Iranians during the Umayyad period: (i) Mawālī, the converts who accepted Islam, and affiliated themselves to Arab tribes within the tribal structure; (ii) Converts, non-Arab Muslims neither associated with any tribe nor belonging to any tribal structure; and (iii) non-Arabs, who did not accept Islam and consistently remained followers of their indigenous religions. Agha draws attention to the previously-discounted third category, largely ignored as the movement unfolded and culminated in the widespread adoption of Islam.

⁵¹² Crone, Patricia, *The Mawālī in the Umayyad Period*, (PhD Dissertation, University of London, 1973), 3, 14-15.

However, the role of mawālī was central in the Revolution whereas the converts provided a base for mass mobilization in the Revolution. Also noteworthy is the fact that a significant number of non-Arabs, rather than being poor artisans, were wealthy, possessed properties, and engaged in business. Thus, economic deprivation did not constitute a driving factor in the revolution. The mawālī were integrated with Arab tribes and had enjoyed economic benefits because of their attachment to the Arab Establishment. However, their adherence to proto-Shiʿī ideology was a factor that played a vital role in the revolution. Furthermore, the majority of non-Arab converts had not yet attained economic prosperity, nor had they been assimilated like the mawālīs. Their revolutionary participation thus occurred at later stages.⁵¹³ But this does not mean that the revolutionary forces consisted of non-Arab Persians. Scholars such as Wellhausen and Dennett allude to a mass, non-Arab, conversion to Islam.⁵¹⁴ Sharon also confirms a “great influx of converts to Islam”, although he rejects the concept of an overwhelming Iranian participation in the Revolution.⁵¹⁵

Shaban’s position meanwhile is contrary to that of the scholars mentioned above. He argues that “Islam was not yet widespread even in Marv itself” when the Revolution broke out in 129/747.⁵¹⁶ Furthermore, on the basis of his quantitative study of conversion, Bulliet rejects the assertion made by Sharon and affirms Shaban’s view, commenting:

[They] support the conclusions of recent investigations of the Abbasid revolution who have seen it as primarily an Arab movement, despite its origin in eastern Iran. The earlier idea that it represents a massive intrusion of Iranian influence into Muslim politics is impossible to sustain when it is realized that the population of Iran was only about 8 percent Muslim in 750 when the Abbasids came to power.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹³ Agha, “The Agents and Forces”, xxxiii, 41.

⁵¹⁴ Wellhausen, *Arab Kingdom*, 457; Dennett, *Conversion*, 128-119.

⁵¹⁵ Sharon, *Revolt*, 28.

⁵¹⁶ Shaban, *ʿAbbasid Revolution*, xv, 115.

⁵¹⁷ Bulliet, Richard W, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History*, (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1979), 43-4.

A careful consideration of the roles of converts and mawālī in the revolution is therefore required. Historiographical sources contain many accounts of mawālī grievances. Both mawālī and converts are consistently shown protesting and complaining about Umayyad maltreatment. Naṣr b. Sayyār, one of the last strong commanders in Khurāsān, attempted to minimise such concerns. Implementing his fiscal reforms in Khurāsān in 121/738-739 when he returned from his first Transoxanian campaign, he exempted all the non-Arabs who had accepted Islam from jizya (poll tax). According to al-Madāʾinī's reports, about thirty thousand non-Arab Muslims benefited from this reform only in Marv, whereas around eighty thousand non-Muslims benefited, albeit illegally. Naṣr redressed the situation, modified the rules and adopted measures for the proper and accurate implementation of fiscal reforms.⁵¹⁸

While such data may not supply the exact number of non-Arab Muslims, it does convincingly suggest that a great number of converts and mawālī were in Khurāsān during the last decade of the Umayyads. Agha warns against over-reliance on al-Madāʾinī's historical accounts, noting that any conclusions from his accounts regarding the conversion must be limited to the demographic situation of Marv, rather than extrapolated to a wider provincial context. Agha further states that "the only fact in this regard extractable from Madāʾinī's text remains as plain as the author of the text intended it to be ... there did exist a large number of converts whose grievances Naṣr addressed."⁵¹⁹

Such reforms were introduced during the reign of ʿUmar II in the spirit of Islamisation rather than in the interests of fiscal reform. In the footsteps of ʿUmar II, Ashras also attempted to pacify the anger of the agitated converts of Soghd.⁵²⁰ Shaban argues that Ashras had to face the threat of Turgesh, and that consequently, he treated the Soghd gently, bestowing grants upon them in order to secure his position with them.⁵²¹ Al-Balādhurī also provides important information about Ashras's actions, which included increasing the tributes demanded from Transoxania, summoning them to Islam and exempting the converts from paying jizya. This policy attracted many to Islam,

⁵¹⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 200/4.

⁵¹⁹ Agha, "The Agents and Forces", 156.

⁵²⁰ Wellhausen, *Arab Kingdom*, 450.

⁵²¹ Shaban, *Abbasid Revolution*, 110.

and since they were exempted from jizya the revenues went into deficit. The policy was effective in calming down the dissatisfied people of Transoxania.⁵²²

Agha argues that,

the establishment, in the periods of intervention between ‘Umar II’s re-scripts and Ashras’ delusive gesture, and between the latter and Naṣr’s reforms, had inadvertently and unwittingly ceded the turf to these two competitors. And all three reformist attempts represent but two brief and ineffective awakenings, and a third which arrived too late.⁵²³

These three reforms were carried out during the Umayyad period to appease the anger of the converts and the mawālī. Agha’s assessment of Van Vloten and Wellhausen seems plausible: he argues that these scholars composed their work at a time when national ideologies were emerging in Europe, and that they depicted the Iranian element in the Revolution under such modern nationalistic approaches. Sharon also highlights Wellhausen’s application of a modern model of national identity and a European political system to the study and analysis of the socio-political situation of the Islamic medieval society.⁵²⁴

As discussed, the matter of mawālī formation and evolution is not as simple as is generally perceived. Socio-political evolution played a significant role in this formation, particularly during the last decade of Umayyad rule. The internal conflict between the Umayyad family, the emergence of the Khawārij and Shi‘ī movements, and the qadarī doctrine gave impetus to the mawālī movement. As mentioned earlier, Walīd II was deposed in 744/126 and Yazīd III succeeded him, supported not only by the Yemeni Syrian army but also by the Qadarīs.⁵²⁵ Under the influence of the Qadarī doctrine, Yazīd devised his policies on justice and equality. Among

⁵²² al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1508-10/2; Agha, “The Agents and Forces”, 166.

⁵²³ Agha, “The Agents and Forces”, 158.

⁵²⁴ Sharon, Moshe, *Black Banners from the East*, 232. cf. Dennett, *Khurāsān*, 60.

⁵²⁵ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 252-254/4; Shaban writes: “Our sources refer to them as Yemenites for two reasons. First, regardless to their nominal tribal affiliations, they were rebelling against the pronounced Qaysite policies of Walīd II. Second, the nomenclature, Yemenite, was the opposite of Qaysite, which at that time meant the army of Jazīra. Significantly enough, the latter stayed out of this upheaval in Syria itself. In fact, the *coup d’état* against Walīd II was, for all practical purposes, the end of the Marwānīd regime. The very basis of its rule was destroyed when it lost the support of the Syrian army.” Shaban, *Islamic History*, 155.

those were (a) that the revenues of each region would be spent on the inhabitants of that region, with only the surplus to be sent to the central government; (b) the tax should be imposed fairly on the subject people, so that they could live in their lands peacefully; and (c) all Muslims, Arabs and mawālī, would be fairly and equitably treated and that non-Arabs would receive stipends on an equal basis.⁵²⁶

5.4.1.3 Concluding Remarks

Scholars holding a traditionalist view and who value the role of the mawālī in the ʿAbbāsīd revolution derive their evidence from Arabic literature, whereas the role of the mawālī in the ʿAbbāsīd revolution is not given significance in the pre-Modern sources of Umayyad history. As we have seen in the case of Ibn Ashʿath, the role of the mawālī was at this point inconsequential in the political struggle against the Umayyad. They remained part of all Umayyad and anti-Umayyad forces in the early chronicles, which validates the view that the mawālī are not considered to be an independent factor against the Umayyads. By contrast, Arab factionalism is given more space in the historical sources. Arab tribalism was strong during the Umayyad period; however, with the arrival of the ʿAbbāsīds, Arab factionalism gradually weakened and lost its power. Thus, we can see how the role of the mawālī increased in the ʿAbbāsīd military establishment and how finally a mamlūk military establishment came into existence. However, no textual historical evidence exists to prove the centrality of the mawālī to Umayyad decline.

This study confirms the over-emphasis on the mawālīs' role, particularly in traditionalist modern sources. There was dissatisfaction among the increasing numbers of mawālī who, having converted to Islam, still had to pay taxes in a manner almost identical to those who did not accept Islam. There was also a significant increase in the number of non-Arab Muslims during the reign of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik. These mawālī were not allowed to serve in the army with payment except in the frontier regions. Due to the social interaction between the mawālī and the descendants of the Arabs in the frontier region, a new social integration was engendered between the descendants of the old Arab muqātila and non-Arabs. They assisted each other on all socio-political grounds. Non-Arab Muslims participated in the political and resistance movements in their own

⁵²⁶ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 256-257/4; Shaban, *Islamic History*, 156.

interest, rebelling against the rulers in North Africa and joining the ʿAbbāsīd revolutionary forces for their rights. However, as has been discussed above, given that they belonged to different tribes and nations, the mawālī were not united against the discriminatory behaviour of the rulers. The decisive part in the revolution was played by former Arab warriors residing in the region of Khurāsān. The Shuʿūbiya meanwhile appears during the ʿAbbāsīd period when the process of Islamisation. This study's assessment of the historical sources suggests that the mawālīs' role in the downfall of the Umayyad was marginal and that most Arabic literary anecdotes purporting to feature mawālī are fabricated, given the significant divergence between these and the accounts found in Muslim historiography.

5.5 A Gramscian Analysis of the Role of the Mawālī during Umayyad Rule

This section analyses the mawālīs' role through the lens of Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony. In the earlier parts of this chapter, the mawālīs' role in anti-Umayyad rebellion movements was presented as illustrated in the modern and pre-Modern sources. The division of the pre-modern sources into two categories – historiographical and literary – has been noted. Each presents the role of the mawālīs differently. Modern sources also interpret the mawālīs' role in various ways. Examining the viewpoints of pre-modern and modern scholars on the mawālīs' role helps to construct a more nuanced picture of the mawālīs' situation. It further enable us to conduct a comprehensive study of the mawālīs' socio-political role during the Umayyad period, which in turn facilitates a Gramscian-style analysis, employing the theory of cultural hegemony. Specifically it asks: how a Gramscian view locates the mawālīs within a subordinate class; how this assists understandings of the mawālīs' developing class consciousness; how the Ibn Ashʿath movement provides context for an analysis of this class consciousness, and how ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz's reforms for elevating the status of the mawālī and addressing their resentments are interpreted according to a Gramscian understanding? Were these reforms introduced to bring change in the political structure or to pacify the anger and bitterness of the anti-Umayyad forces?

This study also considers whether it is possible to say that ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz's reforms represent, in Gramscian term, an attempt to stage passive revolution? It further considers how the reforms introduced by Ashras and Naṣr b. Sayyār in his last days may be interpreted in the light of Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony. The presence of mawālī in all anti- and pro-Umayyad

socio-political movements displays all the characteristics of what Gramsci termed contradictory 'common sense'. The role of Shu'ūbiya is also evaluated with reference to Gramsci's concept of folklore. Finally this section assesses the mawālīs' role in the Umayyad decline through application of Gramsci's cultural hegemony theory, since this highly influential social theory can shed light on the reality of mawālī contributions to the dynasty's eventual decline.

5.5.1 Mawālī as a Subordinate Class and Gramsci

Modern and pre-modern sources alike portray the mawālī as a class subordinate to the Arab rulers. The early Umayyads successfully established their authority over the non-Arab mawālī without conferring equal rights on them; the mawālī in turn accepted Arab hegemony without significant protest. The question as to why the mawālī extended their consent and willingness to the Umayyads and Arab aristocracy remains to be answered, as does that of the nature of the socio-political conditions which compelled them to accept the Arab hegemony. In Gramscian theory, certain conditions are necessary for one class to acquire hegemony over the other. Gramsci identifies three conditions as necessary for the establishment of hegemony. First, the hegemonic class must have the potential to transform the economic base. Change at the level of production, the point at which hegemony first develops, brings a new development which shapes future developments in a particular direction. Secondly, the hegemonic class attempts to acquire control over the institutions of the state. In so doing, the hegemonic class uses the state apparatuses to extend its control over the society. These shape the political structure in the manner best suited to their own interests. At this stage the hegemonic class acquires authority by maintaining "equilibrium between its own fundamental interests which must prevail, and that of secondary social groups which must not be sacrificed",⁵²⁷ and the political structure in the existing economic conditions unites the subordinate groups under the rule of the dominant class or group.

Thirdly, the hegemonic class presents its ideology through intellectuals who present the ideology and worldview of the dominant class in a manner acceptable to the subordinate class. Scholars diffuse the 'dominant class' ideology throughout society, developing an ideological organic link

⁵²⁷ Texier, Jacques, "Gramsci, Theoretician of the Superstructures" in *Gramsci and Marxist Theory*, Chantal. Mouffe (ed.), (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd), 49-79.

through which to integrate the various sections of society. Woolcock asserts that, in Gramscian understanding, a class is able to reinforce its authority over society by virtue of its capacity to control the society's economic activities. At this point, the ideas of a ruling class become the ruling ideas and by virtue of these dominant ideas, the ruled class extends its active consent to the ruling class.⁵²⁸

The chief economic resources were in the hands of the Arabs, who fulfilled all of these conditions during the Umayyad period and consequently had the potential to transform the economic base to their desired direction. Meanwhile, the position of the mawālī was secondary, since they were workers under their Arab masters and lacked the authority to move the economic base in a particular direction. Only Arabs had the capacity to shape people's future in a specific direction. The ruling party of the Umayyads was Arab, as were all leading oppositional parties who claimed Arab supremacy. In theory, the Khawārij argued for the equality of all Muslims but in practice they were also centred around the Arab identity. This too put the Arabs in a position to assert their authority over the mawālī who undertook to work as a subordinate class. Further, the Umayyads were the dominant hegemon among the Arabs because of their successful control over the institutions of the state. The early Umayyads, in contrast to their oppositional forces, controlled the state apparatuses in order to extend control over society. They successfully maintained an equilibrium between their own fundamental interests and those of the mawālī, and while the non-Arabs might not have been satisfied with their subordinate status, the existing economic conditions forced them to accept Umayyad hegemony.

The Umayyads also fulfilled Gramsci's third condition, according to which the dominant class mobilises the intellectual to present the ideology of the dominant class in a manner acceptable to the subordinate class. The intellectuals disseminated an Umayyad worldview and developed an ideological organic link for uniting various social strata. By obtaining the consent of the mawālī, the early Umayyads became the hegemonic class. As Gramsci explains, hegemony is "the spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed

⁵²⁸ Woolcock, Joseph A., Politics, Ideology and Hegemony in Gramsci's Theory, *Social and Economic Studies*, vol. 34, No. 3 (September 1985), 199-210 at 205.

on social life by the dominant fundamental group.”⁵²⁹ As previously mentioned, al-Ṣalābī classified mawālī into three categories: (i) the mawālī who had been slaves and later freed by their Arab lords; (ii) the mawālī who were leading Islamic scholars; and (iii) the mawālī who accepted Islam without associating themselves with any Arab tribe.⁵³⁰

The first two categories accepted Arab hegemony. Those mawālī who were religious scholars occupied the role of intellectuals and ‘deputies’ of the ruling class. For instance, when ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz offered Makḥūl the office of judge, the latter refused to accept, remarking: “The Prophet said: ‘only a man respected by his own people is to judge men’ but I am a mawlā.”⁵³¹ This clearly demonstrates the non-Arab intellectuals’ acceptance of Arab authority. This study does not claim that both of these categories accepted Umayyad hegemony. Rather, it suggests that they accepted Arab hegemony and extended their consent to accept Arab authority. In the early Marwānid period, the mawālī worked under the authority of different Arab groups to whom they were affiliated. The third category of mawālī meanwhile was characterised by class consciousness and social dissatisfaction over the issue of equal rights and assimilation into Muslim society. They stood for their rights throughout Umayyad rule, participating in several anti-Umayyad Arab movements. Perhaps because they realised that Arab authority was well established, they did not separately initiate any resistance movement; consequently they worked as a class that was subordinate to the Arabs during the entire period. The emergence of the Shuʿūbiya movement occurred later, during the ʿAbbāsīd era.

5.5.2 Gramsci’s Theory of Cultural Hegemony and the Mawālīs’ Role in Ibn Ashʿath’s Movement

Arab hegemony was primarily established during the early Umayyad period. It seems that the non-Arabs accepted their position as a subordinate class, and remained untroubled by class consciousness or struggle. The mawālī, as common men, did not have any coherent thinking about their identity and social status, and this too is consistent with Gramsci’s elaboration. To Gramsci,

⁵²⁹ Gramsci, *Selections From the Prison Notebooks*, 12, 123-205.

⁵³⁰ Al-Ṣalābī, *al-Dawlah al-Umwīya*, 689-690/2.

⁵³¹ Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 105, Note: Makḥūl was a Nubian slave and a leading scholar of Islamic Jurisprudence. He was the teacher of al-Awzāʿī.

common men often hold a contradictory position on a particular topic, due to what he terms their ‘disjointed and episodic’ consciousness. Contradiction is one of the most important characteristics of common sense.⁵³² In Gramscian terms, the mawālī possessed common sense. Therefore, they joined various socio-political movements during the Umayyad period without realising their own identity. Their participation in Ibn Ash‘ath’s movement also reveals their contradictory thinking.

Why did the mawālī support Ibn Ash‘ath particularly when they knew that both Ibn Ash‘ath and Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf were Arabs? Ibn Ash‘ath did not initiate his movement for the mawālī cause. Similarly, there is no reference in historical sources to Ibn Ash‘ath’s criticism of the Umayyads for their discriminatory policies regarding the mawālī. Ibn Ash‘ath’s movement, as discussed above, was not initiated in response to hostilities between the mawālī of Iraq and the Syrian regime. Rather, it responded to the conflict that emerged between Ibn Ash‘ath and Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, when the latter appointed the former as leader of the Peacock Army, directing him towards Sijistān in 80AH. The army was successful but Ibn Ash‘ath later rejected Ḥajjāj’s orders. Al-Ṭabarī noted that Ibn Ash‘ath’s army consisted of one hundred thousand soldiers, gathered from Kufa, Basra, the frontier regions of the state and Dayr Jamājim. They were not only mawālī but also Arabs, and all demanded Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf’s dismissal from power.⁵³³

Mawālī participation in the Ibn Ash‘ath movement reveals their contradictory position. They supported an Arab against an Arab without realising that neither had any agenda to strengthen or elevate the mawālīs’ position. The absence of coherence in their thinking gave the anti-Umayyad resistance movement the chance to use them for their own gain. Moreover, their struggle was disjointed and episodic, due to the lack of class consciousness and coherent identity. Thus, both Umayyad and anti-Umayyad groups utilised the force of mawālī for their own ends.

5.5.3. The Mawālī and Umayyad Reforms- A Passive Revolution

The third category of the mawālī, as noted above, is that of the non-Arabs who accepted Islam. Class consciousness emerged primarily from within this category of non-Arabs and in particular

⁵³² Saldanha, Denzil, “Antonio Gramsci and the Analysis of Class Consciousness: Some Methodological Considerations”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, (Vol. 23, No. 5. Jan 30, 1988), 11-18 at 14.

⁵³³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 156/5.

among the people of Khurāsān. These converted non-Arabs included both poor artisans and the landlords and aristocrats of previous regimes. Furthermore, the Arab settlers were in a close relationship with these converted non-Arabs. Another element of their class consciousness was the active work of anti-Umayyad groups in the region. Such groups initiated their political movements on the slogan of equality for all Muslims, and advocated the assimilation of Arabs with non-Arabs while condemning discriminatory socio-economic policies. All these elements contributed to the development of class consciousness among the people of Khurāsān. In a Gramscian perspective, a society characterised by strong class consciousness is a society that is difficult to control. Therefore, the ruling class has to devise suitable and acceptable policies in order to maintain its hegemony. Without such measures, great leeway exists for flourishing rebellious movements to end the authority of the ruling class. In order to pacify people's rebellious tendencies the ruling class has to introduce reforms in the existing system.

Historical sources give great importance to the rule of ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz for his socio-economic and political reforms. He presented a worldview different from his predecessors, for instance exempting converted non-Arabs from the poll-tax and introducing a policy of agreements and reconciliation with anti-Umayyad Khawārij and ʿAlids. A Gramscian view would interpret all such reforms as attempts to appease the oppositional forces without changing the original structure of the ruling class. Gramsci considers that the ruling class introduces such steps as a way through which an organic crisis may be diffused. They reorganise the structure and pattern of the government without changing the dominance of the ruling class. These reforms are launched to delay the organic crisis and to prevent “the development of a revolutionary adversary by ‘decapitating’ its revolutionary potential.”⁵³⁴ As Fatton explains, “Society had to change if it were to preserve its most fundamental structures”,⁵³⁵ and a passive revolution represents the pre-emptive response of the ruling class to a dissatisfied and disorganised subordinate class containing the potential and threat eventually to challenge their authority. In this situation, Gramsci notes: “the traditional ruling class, which has numerous trained cadres, changes men and programmes and

⁵³⁴ Sassoon, Anne Showstack, “Passive Revolution and the Politics of Reform,” in Anne Showstack Sassoon (ed.) *Approaches to Gramsci* (London: Writers and Readers, 1982). 133.

⁵³⁵ Fatton, “Gramsci and Legitimization of State”, 731.

with greater speed than is achieved by the subordinate classes, re-absorbs the control that was slipping from its grip.”⁵³⁶

Muslim historians and Islamists tend to eulogise ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz for his reforms, which were focused towards organic crisis and its potential to challenge the authority of the ruling class. His reforms were an attempt to restore the hegemony of the ruling class. While he initiated dialogue with the Khawārij, he did not accept their real demands. Meanwhile the Khawārij accepted his authority and demanded changes in the criteria for caliphal selection. They asked him to change the will of Sulaymān b. ‘Abd al-Malik, according to which Yazīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik would be the ruler after ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. They realised him that Yazīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik was not a pious person and that consequently he was ineligible for this post. ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz accepted their notion in theory but in practice did not change the will of Sulaymān regarding Yazīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik. In fact, ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s reformation was a successful attempt to bring about passive revolution. He successfully restored the hegemony of the ruling class by re-arranging and re-deploying political forms of governance and representation. As noted earlier, a passive revolution is a peaceful survival of a ruling class in conditions of organic crisis.⁵³⁷

Passive revolution thus signifies revolution without revolution. It constitutes a peaceful restoration of ruling class power, characterised by a constrained type of hegemony which touches only the cadres and leaders of the subaltern classes, but not the subaltern classes themselves. The result, concludes Gramsci, is “the formation of an ever more extensive ruling class.”⁵³⁸ In this perspective, the organic crisis is resolved almost exclusively “from above”.⁵³⁹ The reformative movement of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz indeed constitutes an effort to resolve the crisis ‘from above’, since he mobilised the leading religious scholars and intellectuals (who in Gramscian terms occupy the role of civil society) to present the state’s world-view adequately. Gramsci asserts that civil society and political society “correspond on the one hand to the function of ‘hegemony’ which the

⁵³⁶ Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 201.

⁵³⁷ Fatton, “Gramsci and Legitimization of State” 371.

⁵³⁸ Gramsci, *Selection from the Prison Notebooks*, 58.

⁵³⁹ Fatton, “Gramsci and Legitimization of State” 372.

dominant group exercises throughout society, and on the other hand to that of ‘direct domination’ or command exercised through the State and ‘juridical government’.”⁵⁴⁰

In hegemony, according to Gramscian thought, a certain way of life and thought is dominant, and is diffused throughout society to inform norms, values and tastes, political practices, and social relations. This diffusion is based on a specific organisation of consent, which has, but is not limited to, an economic base, and results from a combination of such coercion and consent, the latter achieved through the hegemonic cooptation of groups in civil society, resulting in “coercive orthodoxy”.⁵⁴¹ Elements of civil society are co-opted by the state and used to secure the acquiescence of the dominated classes and to ensure their identification with the hegemonic world order. In this state of affairs, civil society becomes part of an extended state, utilised by the ruling class to form and maintain its hegemony by cooptation, through which the ruling class assimilates ideas that it sees as potentially dangerous, and creates cultural and political consensus. This process becomes an instrument of passive revolution, through which hegemonic forces allow limited (and to an extent false) freedom of self-expression for hegemonic groups, thereby maintaining the continued consent to the current relations of force.⁵⁴²

The intellectuals of a given society present the ruling class’s worldview in a manner acceptable to the ruled class. This process may be seen as their creation of a space in which the ruled class feels inspired to offer its consent to the ruling class, who determine and define the law and order of the land. The extent to which intellectuals fail in securing the free consent of the subordinate class is the extent to which the state has to use ‘coercive apparatus’⁵⁴³ to discipline those who do not accept hegemony by consent. In the case of failure, an organic crisis develops, jeopardising the state’s future. Perhaps the reforms of ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz prolonged Umayyad hegemony because he successfully mobilised the intellectuals of his era to diffuse the state’s worldview among the masses. The above discussion endorses the suggestion by this thesis that the reformative movement

⁵⁴⁰ Gramsci, Antonio, “Letter to Tatania Schucht”, January 30, 1933, in *Lettere dal carcere*, eds. Sergio Caprioglio and Elsa Fubini, Turin: Einaudi, 1972, 736-37.

⁵⁴¹ Gramsci, Selection from the Prison Notebooks, 831.

⁵⁴² Hagai Katz, “Gramsci, Hegemony, and Global Civil Society Networks”, *International Journal of Voluntary and Non-profit Organizations*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (December 2006), 333-348 at 335.

⁵⁴³ Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, 209, 536.

of ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz was actually a successful effort for passive revolution. However, the crux of the problem between subordinate and ruling classes remained unresolved and reappeared during the last eight years of Umayyad rule. While Naṣr b. Sayyār also attempted in his last days to eliminate the grievances of the people of Khurāsān, it was too late to appease them in a long term and appropriate manner. Moreover, Naṣr could not successfully mobilise civil society to acquire the consent of the common people.

5.5.3 A Critical Study of the Shuʿūbīya in the Context of Class Consciousness and Identity in Gramscian Perspective

As the earlier part of this chapter has shown, the Shuʿūbīya movement emerged to blunt the sharp boundaries of the racial legacy that had segregated the Muslim community into Arabs and non-Arabs. Their approach was more holistically based and focused on the elements of Muslim nationalistic identity. The Shuʿūbīya movement, which had attracted many mawālī, took their name from the words in the Qurānic verses, which reveal that Allah created male and female and made the people into shuʿūb (races) and qabāʾil (tribes) for mutual recognition, and continue to declare that the person who is most pious amongst the people is the most noble.⁵⁴⁴ The qabāʾil were taken to signify the Arab tribes while the shuʿūb denoted the non-Arab mawālī. These non-Arab mawālī were of different categories, e.g., those who were under the Sassanid Kingdom, and can be divided into two groups. The dihqāns or feudal lords owned property and interests under Sassanid rule and functioned as a bridge between the King and the masses. Most of these nobles saved their prestige by accepting Islam and retaining their previous position while the masses, treated as slaves, only managed, after their acceptance of Islam to secure their freedom by attaching themselves to some Arab tribe. Thus they gained the status of mawālī or client to their masters. While the second group mawālī were from the lower classes, they were inspired by Islamic ideas of equality, justice and Muslim identity.⁵⁴⁵ However, in practice, they could not secure equal positions to those occupied by Arabs.

⁵⁴⁴ Qurān, (49) al-Ḥujrāt, Verse No. 13.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *al-Iqd al-Farid*, 30/2.

Various factors were involved in the development of class consciousness and identity among the people of Khurāsān. Consequently such class consciousness appeared to differing degrees among the mawālī of Khurāsān. Gramsci suggests that there are three different levels of consciousness of various social groups: (i) the class consciousness of the masses of a class; (ii) the ideology of ‘organic party intellectuals’; and (iii) the science of the philosophers. Socio-economic aspirations are expressed in the class consciousness of the masses by developing a ‘common sense’ understanding of the class situation, while the ideology of ‘organic party intellectuals’ attempts to mobilise the masses and present an ideology based on popular aspirations; whereas the science of the philosophers or the specialised workers attempts to understand a social reality. Class consciousness, ideology and science therefore all hold hegemonic significance. In the case of Khurāsān, the mawālī of Khurāsān by virtue of their high socio-economic position, argued for equal rights. Secondly, because of their distinctive socio-economic position, the realisation of class identity appeared among the masses. Thirdly, the intellectuals of the Shu‘ūbīya worked actively to inspire class consciousness among the people. Fourthly, the ‘Abbāsīd movement helped them to develop class consciousness among the masses because this, too, was a group oriented towards the equality and assimilation of all human beings on the basis of religious ideology. Lastly, the Shu‘ūbīya movement flourished not only in Khurāsān but across the ‘Abbāsīd caliphate when the non-Arabs successfully acquired a central position in the ‘Abbāsīd court.

As discussed earlier, the development of Shu‘ūbīya reached its climax during the ‘Abbāsīd period, while the Umayyad period provided the starting point for the development of class-consciousness among the non-Arabs. According to Gramsci’s theory, common sense philosophy provides fertile ground for the development of class consciousness and the reinforcement of ethnic identity. He identifies sources of the common sense philosophy or ‘spontaneous philosophy’ of the masses, theorising that the former may be found in language, as it may be found “in popular religion and therefore, also in the entire system of beliefs, superstitions, opinions, ways of seeing things and of acting, which are collectively bundled together under the name of ‘folklore’.”⁵⁴⁶ The stories of al-Aghānī and al-‘Iqd al-Farīd, as some of them revealed above, in the context of the Umayyad era

⁵⁴⁶ Gramsci, *Selections From the Prison Notebooks*, 323

are by far the best example of ‘spontaneous philosophy’ and ‘folklore’. Many of the stories of al-Aghānī and al-‘Iqd are not considered authentic and are usually criticised for their fabrications, even though these stories had greatly assisted the construction of class consciousness and ethnic identity.

The mawālī slowly gathered enough strength to take opportunities to elevate themselves to the Arabs’ level. According to tradition, the Arabs incorporated the mawālī into the Arabian tribal system and the mawālī fought side by side with the Arabs. However, the Arabs did not accept the non-Arab Muslims as equal members of their socio-religious life. The mawālī gradually grew in number and their importance increased, particularly the Persian and Christian mawālī who were well-read and highly-educated. Because of their increasing importance, they gained a higher position in Muslim society. Furthermore, the Muslim identity of the mawālīs became evident when the state compelled the distinguishing of non-Muslims from Muslims. Hakim argues that, “both became merged in the term ‘Muslim’ which even to this day represents for many people, their nationality. The politico-religious movement then swept away the dominion of the Umayyad and thereby the International Empire of the Abbasids supplemented nationalistic Islam.”⁵⁴⁷ Arab hegemony came to end and a mixed official aristocracy came into being. Thus the element of Persian civilisation became a permanent feature of Muslim society. Similarly, the infiltration of Hellenism and the Greek norm became evident with the conquest of Syria, Mesopotamia, and Egypt.

The traditional authority patterns of the early Umayyad were challenged. Both the Arab settlers in Khurāsān and their subjects posed many questions concerning the rationality of the traditional state of affairs. The Khawārij, ‘Abbāsids, and Qadarīs were the most important intellectual movements to question the established authority of the Umayyads. Attracting the masses in large numbers, their teachings played a vital role in the shaping of Arab political history. Gramsci views this “faith in a certain rationality of history” as mixed with superstitious and religious elements, giving the masses reliance in time of defeat, but leading to passivity if not subjected to critical pedagogy.⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴⁷ Hakim, *Predestination*, 199.

⁵⁴⁸ Gramsci, Selection From the Prison Notebooks, 336-337, 420.

Even if the dominant hegemony attempts to bring about homogeneity in religious belief, in practice, even within a single religion, there are number of contradictory religions that are practised. Common sense is “influenced by the crudest and least elaborated forms” of these religions and even previous religions.⁵⁴⁹ In this context, it may plausibly be argued that pre-Islamic Persian vanity helped the people of Khurāsān to construct their distinctive identity in the changing milieu of Arab domination.

The socio-religious movements of the late Umayyad period were agreed on one point, namely that they rejected all kinds of discrimination, particularly on a racial basis. They were critical of any distinction between Muslims. For this reason, they rejected the Umayyad policies that centred on the superiority of Arabs and the inferiority of non-Arabs. Consequently, a significant number of the mawālī were present in these movements and participated in the rebellions against Umayyad rule. Similarly the Shi‘īs gathered great support from the mawālīs of Marv. Documentary evidence indicates that the mawālī joined all movements that validated their privileges. This situation, according to Gramscian theory, indicates that class consciousness was not established among the mawālī. Accordingly, their role in the revolutionary process may be viewed with some confidence as secondary and marginal. Furthermore, since they did not have a coherent ideology which could help them to secure their rights, they joined different oppositional forces who assured their wellbeing.

Belyaev, as a modern revisionist scholar, applies the Marxist approach to interpreting Umayyad history.⁵⁵⁰ The Marxist approach observes how society evolves through the relationship of different classes in social stages, from primitive to communal, to slave, to feudal society. Belyaev asserts that the Byzantine society was a slave society moving towards the formation of a proto-feudal society, while the Arabs were at the primitive communal stage moving to a slave society when Islam appeared in the Arabian Peninsula. He studies early Islamic history from the perspective of social development and observes a shift in the social order of the tribal Arab aristocracy that emerged as a class of feudal landlords. The Umayyads are presented as tyrants

⁵⁴⁹ Denzil Saldanha, “Antonio Gramsci and the Analysis of Class Consciousness” PE-14; Gramsci, *Selections From the Prison Notebooks*, 420.

⁵⁵⁰ For instance the relationships between different social classes and the relations of the oppressed and oppressors.

whereas the Khawārij were the militant working class, dissatisfied with their social and economic status. Belyaev criticises Hishām's fiscal policies, including his imposition of heavy taxes which lost society's support and engendered widespread unrest and in turn resulted in the emergence of factionalism which Hishām's successors could not manage. As Belyaev notes:

the active discontent of the working masses in all the lands of the Caliphate resulted in the downfall of the Umayyad dynasty for it had lost all social support. The vast resources accumulated by Hishām in the state treasury were dissipated under his politically inept and inactive successors, and his fiscal administration, considered excellent and his well-organised army were soon out of order.⁵⁵¹

Belyaev considers Marwān b. Muḥammad an excellent military leader who nevertheless failed to restore Umayyad political authority due to factionalism and to conflict within the royal family. From this perspective, the Khawārij mobilised the dissatisfied masses in Iraq while the ʿAbbāsids attracted the local dihqān and peasant working class of Khurāsān and Transoxiana. Their rebellion against the Umayyads is categorically viewed as the struggle of a deprived working class which resulted in the fall of a regime.⁵⁵² Belyaev clearly saw the mawālī as working class. All socio-political and religious parties took advantage of the social unrest in order to motivate the working classes to eventually terminating Umayyad rule. Analysing the causes of the Umayyads' decline through the application of Marxist theory is undoubtedly a novel approach. However, the construction of the Khawārij and the mawālī as working class seems somewhat misleading. Belyaev argues that increasing fiscal exploitation, harsh punishment, and executions of defaulters generated unrest and hostility against the rule of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik, until the masses rose up against the rule in almost all of the provinces of the caliphate.

Contrary to Marx's historical materialism, Gramsci focused on analysis of the impact of the socio-cultural and ideological in the formation of hegemony. His hegemony concept refreshed Marxist approaches to the analysis of revolutionary process. As Femia explains:

Gramsci's description of popular consciousness in modern bourgeois society is, in principle, empirically testable; and it is also evaluated in the light of recent survey

⁵⁵¹Belyaev, *Arabs, Islam and the Arab Caliphate*, 187.

⁵⁵² *ibid.*, 188-190.

studies. The major premise of Gramsci's theory of revolution is that objective material interests are not automatically or inevitably translated into class consciousness.⁵⁵³

In the light of Gramscian understandings of the modern bourgeoisie, the present study finds that class consciousness did not emerge among the people of Khurāsān on the basis of objective material interests; rather, it was the ʿAbbāsīd ideology that inspired and encouraged its development. Different sections of society united themselves against the Umayyads under the ʿAbbāsīds who presented a solid alternative and counter-hegemonic ideology. Thus, the mawālī and Arab settlers supported the ʿAbbāsīds to overthrow the Umayyads. However, given their lack of clear corporate identity as well as of critical self-awareness, the role of the mawālī in achieving this dramatic and lasting change was in all likelihood quite marginal.

In addition to the growing role of religious movements and the changing socio-economic relations of Arabs with non-Arabs, a significant change also occurred in Arab tribal structure. The ruling Arabs could not maintain their ʿaṣabīya in a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society. Consequently, the ʿAbbāsīds, with assistance from the non-Arabs of Khurāsān, brought revolution. The role of ʿaṣabīya in the Umayyads' decline is analysed in the following chapter.

⁵⁵³ Femia, Gramsci's Political Thought, 24.

6 Chapter Six: ʿAṣabīya, Tribalism and the Decline of the Umayyads

6.1 Introduction

In evaluating the early sources on the issue of ʿaṣabīya (group feeling) and its role in the fall of the Umayyads, it is assumed that the later Umayyads were unable to maintain their ʿaṣabīya, since it is observed that a conflict arose among members of the Umayyad family. Similarly, at a national level, the Arabs could not preserve their ʿaṣabīya and conflict broke out among the Arab tribes. Consequently, the ʿAbbāsids took advantage of the Umayyads' weak ʿaṣabīya and tribal discord and, with the support of Arab settlers and the non-Arabs of Khurāsān, replaced the Arab kingdom of Umayyad. To understand the tribal conflict in a historical perspective, the theme of ʿaṣabīya is presented through three competing groups: (i) The internal conflict within the Umayyad family; (ii) Yemenīs/Kalbīs versus Muḍarīs/Qaysīs; and (iii) the Hāshimids-Abbasids versus the Umayyads. The latter theme contains both tribal and religious elements. The Hashimid-Umayyad conflict does have historical tribal roots but because the Hāshimid movement was initiated on religious grounds, it did not promote a tribal identity. However, the movement did take advantage of tribal rivalries, which is one of two important themes already touched on for discussion. The question is, how did the modern and pre-modern historiographers interpret and present in their works the ʿaṣabīya and its role in the decline of the Umayyads? To answer this, Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony will be applied to the analysis of tribal conflict and its role in the fall of the Umayyads. In order to present this systematically, this chapter is divided into three sections.

The first section defines the concept of ʿaṣabīya and how it is theorised by Ibn Khaldūn. A meticulous effort was made to understand how pre-modern scholars recorded the role of ʿaṣabīya in the Umayyads' decline by analysing the works of five pre-modern historiographers:

1. Al-Yaʿqūbī, Aḥmad b. Yaʿqūb (d. 284/897): *Tārīkh al-Yaʿqūbī*
2. Al-Ṭabarī, Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr (d. 310/923): *Tārīkh al-Rusūl wa-al-Mulūk*
3. Al-Masʿūdī, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Husayn (d. 345/956): *Murūj al-Dhahab*
4. Ibn Athīr, ʿAlī b. Muḥammad (d. 630 A.H.): *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*
5. Ibn Khaldūn, Abū Zayd ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad (808/1406): *Kitāb al-ʿIbar wa-Dīwān al-Mubtadāʾ wa-al-Khabar*

Through the application of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *ʿaṣabīya*, the research found that a careful study of each source enabled an understanding of the downfall of the Umayyads, with special reference to the *ʿaṣabīya*. Examining the sources showed how much *ʿaṣabīya* contributed to the disintegration of the Umayyads and how much importance was given to this particular theme by these five historiographers.

The second section is devoted to the study of the modern sources in order to determine how they interpret the role of *ʿaṣabīya* in the disintegration of the Umayyad dynasty, while the third section focuses on an analysis of the role of tribalism in the fall of the Umayyads in the light of Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony.

6.2 Ibn Khaldūn's Theory of the *ʿAṣabīya*

All five pre-modern sources contain significant reports regarding tribal conflict. However, Ibn Khaldūn has formulated his own systematic theory of *ʿaṣabīya* in the study of the evolution and development of human society. Thus, it is necessary at this point to explain Ibn Khaldūn's concept of *ʿaṣabīya*. Ibn Khaldūn is regarded as the originator of the *ʿaṣabīya* (group feeling) theory and the founder of Muslim positivist theory.⁵⁵⁴ He based his ideas on observation and speculation rather than on traditional concepts,⁵⁵⁵ and attempted to study a society through its social progress. According to his theory, *ʿaṣabīya* is the vibrant element that plays a central role in the acquisition of power, the formation of state, and the rise and fall of civilisations based on the rise and fall of 'the state'. Therefore, *ʿaṣabīya* is given high priority in Ibn Khaldūn's theory of the rise and fall of civilisations. However, modern scholars interpret the concept of *ʿaṣabīya* in different ways. For example, the Egyptian scholar, Abdullah Enan explains that the *ʿaṣabīya* constitutes the very life of a state or dynasty;⁵⁵⁶ and Aziz al-Azmeh sees *ʿaṣabīya* as armour or a weapon; that is, a strong element of a Sovereign Group.⁵⁵⁷ M. G. Rasul explains the idea of Ibn Khaldūn's concept of

⁵⁵⁴ The early Muslim historiography is based on tradition and revelation. Ibn Khaldūn was the first serious Muslim historian to propose the study and analysis of human development through empirical evidence by applying logical reasoning rather than divine revelation.

⁵⁵⁵ For details, see: Nathaniel Schmidt, *Ibn Khaldūn*, (Lahore: Universal Books, 1978).

⁵⁵⁶ Enan, Muhammad Abdullah, *Ibn Khaldūn: His Life and Work*, (Lahore: Shaik Muhammad Ashraf, 1971), 116.

⁵⁵⁷ Aziz Azmeh, *Ibn Khaldūn, an Essay in Reinterpretation*, (London: Routledge, 1982), 34.

‘aṣabīya. Ibn Khaldūn considers that in the formation of a state, one of the factors is the sense of oneness or group-mind, which he termed ‘aṣabīya’; and this group mind and religion are two of the most important factors at the root of its evolution.⁵⁵⁸

Ibn Khaldūn illustrated different types of Bedouin society in the prolegomena of his History, and pronounced new theories, one of which was ‘aṣabīya, to explain this social phenomenon. He suggested that the ‘aṣabīya was a source of power and authority in a nomadic and tribal society based on a common family lineage and within which every member enjoyed and shared the same power and nobility. He maintained that it was necessary for the defence of a hamlet in a Bedouin set-up to establish a tribal militia of noble youths of that tribe. They could succeed only if they were a closely-knit group. Respect for ‘aṣabīya was instinctive and based on a blood relationship or similar, such as through marriage.⁵⁵⁹ The direct relationship provided a strong group feeling, which would weaken with the generations. Therefore, the power of ‘aṣabīya tended to last for four generations before beginning to decline. It might extend through six generations but would be in a state of decadence.⁵⁶⁰ The vitality of the tribe and its nobility would become increasingly weaker until finally the unity of the tribe would disintegrate and its power would end with the dissolution of its noble lineage. Consequently, power shifted from one tribe to another, that is, to a tribe that proved to have superiority in terms of number and force.⁵⁶¹

Ibn Khaldūn attempted to make his theory more coherent in the third chapter of his prolegomena. He asserted that the major object of ‘aṣabīya was to acquire sovereignty.⁵⁶² No state or dynasty could come into existence without the vital force of ‘aṣabīya. However, when a tribe attained power in a state then the leading members of the tribe did not bestow authority on all its members. However, this attitude was considered to be detrimental to the unity of the tribe. The dynamics of ‘aṣabīya are thus contrary to that of state sovereignty. This is because on the basis of ‘aṣabīya, all members of a tribe attempt to share their power and resources while the state aims to monopolize

⁵⁵⁸ M.G. Rasul, *The Origin And Development Of Muslim Historiography*, 47.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-‘Ibar*, 106/1.

⁵⁶⁰ *ibid.*, 112/1.

⁵⁶¹ *ibid.*, 119/120-1.

⁵⁶² *ibid.*, 114/1.

glory, fame, and comfort for the monarch or royal family. The monarch or members of the royal family cannot satisfy all the members of the tribe. Eventually, they begin to disagree with the royal family, there is conflict and ʿaṣabīya or tribal solidarity becomes weak which culminates in the downfall of the state.⁵⁶³

Ibn Khaldūn claimed that the state, like men, had a ‘natural’ age. According to his assessment, a state generally lasted from its emergence to its rise and fall throughout three generations. One generation was estimated to last about forty years. Thus, a natural age for the state was about one hundred and twenty years.⁵⁶⁴ He considered religion to be an important factor in the extent of the authority of the state but, according to him, religious doctrines could not be upheld without ʿaṣabīya. Ibn Khaldūn felt that royal authority could be achieved only with the benefit of a group or group feeling. Religion injected a new vigour into a tribe at the beginning of an era, along with its power to generate group feeling. However, religious propaganda could only be successful when it was accompanied by group feeling.⁵⁶⁵ He took the view that when group feeling disappeared from a tribe, royal authority would pass to another branch until the whole tribe ceased to exist. With the advent of Islam the pre-Islamic authority of the Umayyads passed to the Hāshimids. The Umayyads restored it when Muʿāwīya came into power and ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān consolidated the authority of the Umayyads on the basis of Arab identity. Then again, authority passed to the ʿAbbāsids who initiated their movement on a religious basis by combining the force of both Arabs and non-Arabs. The early Muslim historical sources are examined to see the extent to which this theory is applicable to Umayyad history.

6.3 Inter-tribal Conflict and Conflict within the House of Umayyads in pre-Modern Sources

During the Umayyad period the pre-modern historians generally recorded historical events without identifying the driving force, whereas the modern scholars present various paradigms for the interpretation of the events of the Umayyad period. According to Judd, three of them are

⁵⁶³ *ibid.*, 119-121/1.

⁵⁶⁴ *ibid.*, 138-139/1.

⁵⁶⁵ *ibid.*, 129-130/1.

particularly significant: “conflict within the Umayyad ruling family, tribal feuds and differences over imperial policy.”⁵⁶⁶ This section aims to understand how the pre-modern sources recorded the first two themes in their chronicles and will help us to understand the value of the interpretation of modern scholars who have selected one of these themes to elaborate the causes of the Umayyads’ decline.

6.3.1 The Tribal Conflict of Yemen versus Muḍar in Pre-modern Sources

The pre-Modern sources of the Umayyad period present various narratives on the issue of tribal conflict between the Yemen and Muḍar, based on the pre-Islamic rivalry between them. For a period of time Islam overrode the tribal rivalries, as the early Muslim caliphs successfully united the hostile tribes and created harmony among them. The caliphs also used Arab unity to expand their rule against their non-Arab and non-Muslim opponents. The early Umayyads remained successful in managing Arab unity and consequently were able to establish an Arab empire, with the Yemenī Syrian tribes providing a strong base for Umayyad rule. The early Umayyads, however, extended their power by maintaining equilibrium between the conflicting tribes. It is argued that the later Umayyads could not unite the Arabs and conflict arose between them on a tribal basis which led them to collapse. The pre-Modern sources illustrated this conflict mainly in the context of socio-political development in Iraq and Khurāsān. Most of the events of tribal conflicts revolve around a pair of characters: Khālīd al-Qasrī and Yūsuf b. ʿUmar in Iraq and Naṣr and al-Kirmānī in Khurāsān. A study of the nature of conflict between Khālīd al-Qasrī and Yūsuf b. ʿUmar is contained in a separate appendix in this thesis. This section aims to analyse the pre-Modern sources in order to understand the nature of tribal conflict, i.e., whether the tribal conflict between the Yemen and Muḍar had its roots in pre-Islamic history or whether there was conflict between various personalities and interest groups and how much importance has been given to tribal conflict in the pre-Modern historiographies.

Al-Yaʿqūbī considers that the conflict between Khālīd al-Qasrī and Yūsuf b. ʿUmar was not on a tribal basis. He records that Hishām removed Khālīd from the governorship of Iraq because he wanted to take strict measures against the Hāshimid movement. Khālīd was not suitable for this

⁵⁶⁶ Steven C. Judd, *The Third Fitna*, 2.

job since he had been accused of providing financial assistance to the Hāshimid leaders, whereas Yūsuf b. ʿUmar had the ability to achieve the required objectives. Yūsuf b. ʿUmar crushed the rebellion and killed Zayd b. ʿAlī and his supporters. Thus, according to al-Yaʿqūbī, it was the Hāshimid movement that played a central role in the fall of the Umayyads whereas the tribal conflict between Qays and Yemen was not real and the rivalry between Khālīd al-Qasrī and Yūsuf b. ʿUmar was on a personal basis only.

Al-Yaʿqūbī briefly notes that the deaths of Khālīd al-Qasrī and Ibrāhīm and Muḥammad, sons of Hishām, created an uncomfortable atmosphere for al-Walīd. Khālīd al-Qasrī's tribe and a group from the Yemen took the oath of allegiance to Yazīd b. al-Walīd, who then took authority into his own hands by deposing and finally killing al-Walīd in Jamādī II, 126 AH.⁵⁶⁷ Al-Yaʿqūbī does not explicitly mention this tribal conflict during the reign of Yazīd b. al-Walīd and Ibrāhīm b. al-Walīd until the end of the latter's rule in Ṣafar, 127.⁵⁶⁸ Al-Yaʿqūbī gives a brief comment on the tribal conflict that emerged between the Yemen and Muḍar in Khurāsān, noting a conflict between the governor of Khurāsān Naṣr b. Sayyār and al-Kirmānī. Naṣr supported the Muḍar against the Yemen. Jadīʿ b. ʿAlī al-Kirmānī was the leader of the Azad tribe, and the Yemen and Rabīʿa extended their loyalty to al-Kirmānī. When Naṣr imprisoned al-Kirmānī, the Yemen and Rabīʿa attacked the prison in order to free him. Al-Yaʿqūbī believed that the Yemen and Rabīʿa upheld al-Kirmānī against Naṣr. Therefore, al-Kirmānī's position was superior to that of Naṣr. Al-Yaʿqūbī also records that Abū Muslim favoured al-Kirmānī.⁵⁶⁹

Despite this, Al-Yaʿqūbī mentions that the power of the last Umayyad caliph, Marwān b. Muḥammad, was based in the army of al-Jazīra and Armenia, while Sulaymān b. Hishām retaliated against him with the help of the Syrian army. Even so, al-Yaʿqūbī does not attempt to show that tribal conflict was a significant factor in regime change.⁵⁷⁰ On the other hand, he considers that the

⁵⁶⁷ al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 73/3.

⁵⁶⁸ *ibid.*, 76/3.

⁵⁶⁹ When both al-Kirmānī and Naṣr fought each other, Abū Muslim prayed, "O God! If they fight forever may they never need your support." However, because Abū Muslim favoured al-Kirmānī he invited him and his fellows to the Hashimids and successfully managed to retain their support until the Hāshimid movement overcame Khurāsān. al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 72-73, 79/3.

⁵⁷⁰ *ibid.*, 75-76/3.

Khawārij struggle against the Umayyads and the conflict between Naṣr and al-Kirmānī for tribal reasons strengthened the position of the Hāshimid-ʿAbbasid movement. After a careful reading of al-Yaʿqūbī's History, it can be concluded that tribal conflict was not a primary cause in the decline of the Umayyads; rather it was the Hāshimid-Abbasid movement in Khurāsān that brought Umayyad rule to an end. Although the tribal conflict between Naṣr and al-Kirmānī was observed and recorded, it seems that this was to show that it was due to individual issues.

Al-Ṭabarī also illustrates a more systematic and coherent picture of the Umayyads in that he devotes more space to the tribal conflict and gives more importance to Khurāsān and the tribal conflict between the Muḍar and the Yemen. Al-Ṭabarī records that the tribal conflict emerged in Khurāsān when Asad b. ʿAbd Allah al-Qasrī was deputy in Khurāsān and fell into conflict with Naṣr b. Sayyār and his Muḍarī fellows. He punished them with lashings, and warned them that Khālīd b. ʿAbd Allah was his brother and was supported by twelve thousand Yemenī soldiers.⁵⁷¹ Hishām dismissed Asad because of his involvement in the tribal conflict. Like al-Yaʿqūbī, Al-Ṭabarī also confirms that the dismissal of Khālīd al-Qasrī and the appointment of Yūsuf b. ʿUmar was an administrative change and that their conflict was not on a tribal basis but involved more personal reasons. Al-Masʿūdī's reports about the removal of Khālīd al-Qasrī strengthen the narrative that it was not due to tribal hostility or a change in the expansionist policy; rather it was an attempt to curb the expanding movement of the Hāshimids. Yūsuf b. ʿUmar undertook the task of crushing the Hāshimids' strength by ruthlessly killing Zayd b. ʿAlī and his followers. On the other hand, though Khālīd was not so hostile towards the Hāshimids, he was blamed for assisting them financially.⁵⁷²

In contrast to al-Yaʿqūbī and al-Ṭabarī, al-Masʿūdī presents a different narrative on the tribal conflict, asserting that Muslim rule needed to be analysed in the context of pre-Islamic Arabia. In this view, the social construction of pre-Islamic Arab history is a process of preparation for the advent of Muhammad. According to him, there were three distinctive tribal groups: the extinct Arabs, the Yemenī Arabs and the Nizārī Arabs. All of these were the descendants of Sām, a son

⁵⁷¹ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 125/4.

⁵⁷² al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, 6-7/2.

of Nūḥ, and migrated to the Arabian Peninsula from Babylon. Al-Masʿūdī finds it difficult to decide which of these three Arab groups was the first to speak Arabic. Little was known about the extinct Arabs while both the Yemenī and Nizārī Arabs claimed this credit. The Nizārīs believed that God had bestowed Arabic to Ismāʿīl, son of Ibrāhīm. However, the Yemenīs asserted that Ismāʿīl had learned this language from the Yemenī tribes living in Mecca. This conflict demonstrates the deep socio-political hostility of both tribal groups. In Al-Masʿūdī's opinion the Yaʿrub b. Qaḥṭān, the ancestor of the Yemenīs, was the originator of the Arabic language while Ismāʿīl had also learned Arabic independently when he was living with the Yemenīs.⁵⁷³

According to al-Masʿūdī, the tribal conflict and rivalry between the Yemenīs and Nizārīs had been strong since the pre-Islamic period, and usually emerged at critical times. For instance, after the defeat of Marwān b. Muḥammad in the battle of Zāb, when ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAlī surrounded Damascus, al-Walīd b. Muʿāwīya b. ʿAbd al-Malik came to the city with fifty thousand soldiers. This was a sufficient force to retaliate against the opposing troops; however, tribal conflict broke out between the Yemenīs and Nizārīs and this conflict, in al-Masʿūdī's view, was so perilous that it led to the complete destruction of the Umayyad family. Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ hanged many Umayyad family members and Syrians in Damascus. Marwān b. Muḥammad was captured in Egypt and killed, and Sulaymān b. Yazīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik was killed in al-Balqāʾ. Arriving at Nahr Abī Faṭras, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAlī killed more than eighty men of the Umayyad royal family on Wednesday, 15th of Dhī al-Qaʿdah , 132 AH./750 CE.⁵⁷⁴ On the basis of the above it can be deduced that al-Masʿūdī considered the tribal conflict and fragility of the Arab aṣabiya as a factor in the fall of the Umayyads. His illustration of the later Umayyads validates the narrative that the tribal conflict helped the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd movement to flourish in Khurāsān and Irāq, with both playing a decisive role in the collapse of the Umayyad regime.

Ibn Athīr, another pre-Modern historian, evaluated the decline of the Umayyads by devoting a reasonable portion of his work to the tribal conflict. Most of his reports are derived from al-Ṭabarī. He argues that the strength of the Umayyads was based on the Yemenīs and Syrian army.⁵⁷⁵ The

⁵⁷³ *ibid.*, 6-7, 45-46/2.

⁵⁷⁴ *ibid.*, 436-438/2.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 299/4.

early Umayyad rulers, including Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik, had established their authority on the basis of the Yemen but also appointed the governors and other important administrative officers from the Muḍar, thereby maintaining equilibrium between the Yemen and Muḍar. Ibn Athīr describes the case of Khālīd b. ʿAbd Allah al-Qasrī, a Yemenī, and his rivalry with Yūsuf b. ʿUmar, a Muḍarī, and its impact in the subsequent history and decline of the Umayyads.

Ibn Athīr also reports that Khālīd served for fifteen years as governor of Iraq and Khurāsān, during the period of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik.⁵⁷⁶ He was accused of assisting Zayd b. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥussayn both financially and morally in his actions against Damascus, and was therefore dismissed and replaced by Yūsuf b. ʿUmar.⁵⁷⁷ Ibn Athīr also confirms the rivalry between Khālīd and Yūsuf b. ʿUmar. However, Hishām did not permit Yūsuf to harm Khālīd.⁵⁷⁸ Khālīd returned to Damascus where he lived peacefully during Hishām's rule. His relations with al-Walīd were disturbed when he refused to take an oath of allegiance to his young sons. It was a critical moment; the prominent leaders of the Yemen and Quḍāʿa, including Ḥurayth, Shabīb b. Abī Mālīk al-Ghassānī, Maṣṣūr b. Jamhūr al-Kalbī Ḥibāl b. ʿAmr, Yaʿqūb b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, Ḥumayd b. Maṣṣūr al-Lakhmī, al-Aṣṣagh b. Zuwāla, al-Ṭufayl b. Ḥāritha, and al-Sarrī Ziyād, gathered around Khālīd urging him to go against the infidel caliph's proposal. He refused and argued that the caliph's infidelity and heresy were rumours.⁵⁷⁹ When al-Walīd asked Khālīd about the details of the meeting, he refused to disclose the discussion. Thus, relations between al-Walīd and Khālīd deteriorated.

Yūsuf b. ʿUmar, the governor of Iraq and Khālīd's worst enemy observed the situation. He came to al-Walīd with money and Iraqi assets. He imprisoned Khālīd, then tortured and finally killed him.⁵⁸⁰ This act infuriated the Yemen and Khālīd's tribe. Ibn Athīr records the expressive anger of the Yemenī poets.⁵⁸¹ Hishām's policy to maintain a balance of power between the Yemen and Muḍar was completely shattered. Hishām had always attempted to minimize the intensity of the hostilities between the Muḍar and Yemen, whereas al-Walīd became a collaborator of the Muḍar.

⁵⁷⁶ *ibid.*, 296/4.

⁵⁷⁷ *ibid.*, 256/4.

⁵⁷⁸ *ibid.*, 296/4.

⁵⁷⁹ *ibid.*, 297-298/4.

⁵⁸⁰ *ibid.*, 298/4.

⁵⁸¹ *ibid.*, 300-301/4.

Thus, the Yemenis gathered around Yazīd b. al-Walīd and extended their allegiance to him.⁵⁸² On the basis of their support, he finally killed al-Walīd b. Yazīd and overthrew the caliph.

Many of the senior members of the royal family expressed their concern about the tribal factionalism and the way through which Yazīd had come to power. His brother al-ʿAbbās warned Yazīd not to go against a legal caliph. He also alarmed his second brother Bishr b. al-Walīd by saying that God had permitted the demise of the Umayyads.⁵⁸³ Yazīd's ascendancy to power was based on the support of the Yemen. He dismissed Yūsuf b. ʿUmar from the governorship of Iraq and appointed Maṣṣūr b. Jamhūr. Maṣṣūr supported Yazīd because of the latter's attachment to Ghaylān's ideas; secondly, he wanted to take revenge for Khālīd.⁵⁸⁴ Observing the changing scenario, Yūsuf b. ʿUmar then fled from Iraq but the Syrian army caught him and imprisoned him in Damascus. Finally, Yazīd, son of Khālīd al-Qasrī killed him there when Ibrāhīm's forces were defeated by Marwān b. Muḥammad.⁵⁸⁵

According to Ibn Athīr the conflict between the Yemen and Nizār escalated during this period, and he illustrates the conflict between Naṣr and al-Kirmānī in great detail. The changing political situation in the central government of Syria extended its influence to the provinces. The province of Khurāsān was the most important as it was the centre of the Shiʿī and Khārijī movements. Under Hishām there were congenial relations between Naṣr and al-Kirmānī during the time of Asad, but their relations deteriorated with the decline of Hishām's policy of tolerance and the tribal balance of power. Ibn Athīr notes that when Naṣr's deputyship in Khurāsān was restored by ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar during the period of Yazīd b. al-Walīd, the Muḍar came to Naṣr and urged him to beware al-Kirmānī who intended to upset Khurāsān's political affairs. They demanded that Naṣr kill al-Kirmānī, or at least put him in prison, but Naṣr, observing the rising power of the ʿAbbāsids in the region, was sufficiently aware not to take any serious step against al-Kirmānī. However, when the Muḍar strengthened their demands, he summoned al-Kirmānī and reminded him of previous grants and rewards given to him. Naṣr reminded him that he had not killed him despite having received

⁵⁸² *ibid.*, 301-302/4.

⁵⁸³ *ibid.*, 302/4.

⁵⁸⁴ *ibid.*, 211/4.

⁵⁸⁵ *ibid.*, 212/4.

orders to do so from Yūsuf b. ʿUmar, the governor of Iraq and Khurāsān. He also reminded him that it was Naṣr who had asked Yūsuf to modify the orders to assassinate him. Naṣr further insisted that he was indebted to him. Al-Kirmānī expressed his gratitude to Naṣr and agreed with him. After that, Naṣr asked him why he intended to disturb peace in the region, but al-Kirmānī denied any such intention.

Naṣr's advisers had a different opinion regarding al-Kirmānī. Sālīm b. Aḥwar proposed without any hesitation that Naṣr should kill al-Kirmānī, while ʿIṣmah b. ʿAbd Allah al-Asadī rebuffed Sālīm and argued that there was a possibility of provoking a conflict, should al-Kirmānī be killed. In Ramaḍān 126 AH, Naṣr ordered them to imprison al-Kirmānī. Ibn Athīr reported that al-Kirmānī escaped from the prison and gathered three thousand soldiers from his tribe, the al-Azad, which had already taken the oath of allegiance to ʿAbd al-Malik b. Ḥarmala, on the authority of Kitāb and of Sunnah His Prophet. While the conflict between Naṣr and al-Kirmānī was resolved following the intervention of prominent people on both sides, it re-emerged, according to Ibn Athīr, when ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar confirmed the deputyship of Naṣr in Khurāsān.⁵⁸⁶

Ibn Athīr reported interesting stories about the alliances and conflicts between Naṣr, al-Kirmānī and Abū Muslim Khurāsānī. It seems that the tribal conflict between the Yemen and Muḍar played a significant role in the fall of the Umayyads and the rise of the ʿAbbāsids. The ʿAbbāsids utilized the tribal conflict sensibly, in their favour. For instance, when Abū Muslim planned to enter Marw, he had to face the alliance between Naṣr and al-Kirmānī. Abū Muslim initially designed a rift between Naṣr and al-Kirmānī by asking al-Kirmānī why he was in alliance with Naṣr who had killed his father. This argument swayed al-Kirmānī and he broke the alliance with Naṣr.⁵⁸⁷ At this moment, al-Kirmānī asked Abū Muslim to form an alliance with the Yemen and Rabīʿa.

On the other hand, Naṣr also extended the same proposal to Abū Muslim and persuaded him to sign a treaty to establish a coalition force with Mudar against the Yemen. Abū Muslim evaluated the proposals of both Naṣr and al-Kirmānī and then joined the Yemen and Rabīʿa party. He asserted that the devil was in the Muḍar as they were adherents of Marwān and his deputies and they had

⁵⁸⁶ *ibid.*, 319-320/4.

⁵⁸⁷ *ibid.*, 376/4.

killed Yaḥyā b. Zayd.⁵⁸⁸ Marthid b. Shaqīq al-Sulamī, one of the prominent members of Abū Muslim, argued that the Muḍar had killed the Prophet's family and his progeny. They supported the Umayyad Marwān al-Jaʿdī and his deputies, and were responsible for all bloodshed, plunder and instability in the region. Naṣr b. Sayyār was Marwān's deputy, and he called for his allegiance in his speeches. Thus the choice was that ʿAlī b. al-Kirmānī formed an alliance with him against Naṣr.⁵⁸⁹ Abū Muslim therefore dispatched Lāhiz b. Qurayz to Naṣr to invite him to accept his authority and undertakings. Realising that he was not in a position to face the alliance of the Yemen, Rabīʿa and ʿAjam (non-Arabs), Naṣr then ran away from Marw. Abū Muslim entered Marw accompanied by al-Kirmānī, and taking advantage of the tribal conflict formed an alliance with the Yemen and Rabīʿa. In this way he gradually unseated Naṣr from Khurāsān. Furthermore, he also shattered the authority of Yemen and Rabīʿa by killing Shaybān al-Ḥarūrī and both brothers ʿAlī b. al-Kirmānī and ʿUthmān b. al-Kirmānī.⁵⁹⁰ In this way, Abū Muslim cleared the way for the rule of the Abbasids.

Ibn Athīr's narrative on the conflict between Naṣr and al-Kirmānī is similar to that of al-Ṭabarī. Al-Ṭabarī records that both of these leaders organised themselves on a tribal basis. Naṣr established his strength on the Muḍar while the Yemen were gathered around al-Kirmānī.⁵⁹¹ On the other hand, the ʿAbbāsīd movement flourished during this time: they organised themselves systematically and their message (daʿwa) was accepted everywhere.⁵⁹² Al-Ṭabarī records that the conflict between Naṣr and al-Kirmānī reached its zenith in 130 AH. Their internal conflict benefited Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī and he extended his authority to such a level that when Naṣr died in 131 AH. there was no competent person who could stop the arrival of Abū Muslim's black banners.

The change in the pattern of authority was another aspect of the Umayyads' decline. Marwān's ascendancy over Damascus was a major change in authority patterns. He owed his strength to al-

⁵⁸⁸ *ibid.*, 372/4.

⁵⁸⁹ *ibid.*, 376-377/4.

⁵⁹⁰ *ibid.*, 380-381/4.

⁵⁹¹ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 265-269/4.

⁵⁹² *ibid.*, 307/10.

Jazīra's army, whereas Yazīd b. al-Walīd and his brother were supported by the Syrian army. Ibn Athīr reported that Marwān marched with the al-Jazīra army towards Damascus. On reaching Qinisrīn, he met Bishr b. al-Walīd and Masrūr b. al-Walīd – deputies of Qinisrīn. They both extended their loyalty to Marwān. Moreover, it was a matter of great importance that the leader of Muḍar/Qays Yazīd b. ʿUmar b. Hubayra took the oath of allegiance to Marwān's mission.⁵⁹³ On the other hand, Ibrāhīm b. al-Walīd and Sulaymān b. Hishām organized the Syrian army which was predominantly Yemenī/Kalbī while the al-Jazīra army was predominately a Muḍarī/Qaysī army.⁵⁹⁴ They fought against each other at ʿAyn al-Jar. The Yemenīs were defeated, hunted and killed by the rising power of Marwān b. Muḥammad. The defeat of Ibrāhīm meant the defeat of the Yemen from the political horizon of Damascus. In this scenario, the Yemen attempted to exterminate the Muḍarīs. For instance, Yūsuf b. ʿUmar was killed in prison with the sons of al-Walīd b. Yazīd by the servant of Yazīd b. Khālīd b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Qasrī.⁵⁹⁵

Yazīd b. Khālīd al-Qasrī fled from Damascus to Ghawṭa and the people of Ghawṭa made him wālī of the city. They gathered around him and prepared, under the leadership of Zāmil b. Amr, to attack Damascus. Marwān b. Muḥammad had been in Ḥamṣ when this uprising took place. He dispatched ʿUmar b. al-Waḍḍāḥ with ten thousand soldiers and destroyed the houses and villages of the Yemen. He killed Yazīd b. Khālīd, defeated the army of Zāmil and killed him and sent his head to Marwān b. Muḥammad in Ḥamṣ.⁵⁹⁶ This battle also demonstrated tribal hostility, since Marwān's Muḍarī followers ruthlessly slaughtered the Yemen and demolished their villages.⁵⁹⁷

According to Ibn Athīr's narratives, the religious forces also benefited from this tribal conflict and organised themselves on these lines; Abū Muslim and the Kharijīs similarly took advantage. The situation in Iraq also reveals an analogous story. For instance there was the case of Ḍaḥḥāk al-Khārījī at the time when the Yemen gathered under the leadership of Ḍaḥḥāk to fight the Muḍar. Ibn Athīr records the details of this alliance. When Marwān came to power, he dismissed Yazīd b.

⁵⁹³ Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 31/4.

⁵⁹⁴ *ibid.*, 331/4.

⁵⁹⁵ *ibid.*, 331- 332/4.

⁵⁹⁶ *ibid.*, 337/4.

⁵⁹⁷ *ibid.*, 337/4.

al-Walīd's governor of Iraq, ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, and appointed al-Naḍr b. Saʿīd al-Ḥarshī in his place. Al-Naḍr had earlier been a deputy of ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar in Irāq, and the latter did not accept al-Naḍr's governorship. Marwān dispatched an army to support al-Naḍr under the leadership of al-Ghuzayyal. The Muḍar gathered around al-Naḍr because of the tribal connection, and in order to strengthen Marwān because he demanded the taking of revenge on behalf of the deposed caliph al-Walīd b. Yazīd since al-Walīd's mother was from the Qays/Muḍar. On the other hand, the Yemen supported ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar because of their strong tribal relations with Yazīd b. al-Walīd. They assisted Yazīd in killing al-Walīd b. Yazīd because the latter had handed over Khālīd al-Qasrī, the chief of Yemen, to Yūsuf b. ʿUmar. Yūsuf killed him brutally; therefore, the Yemen supported ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar while the Qays maintained their loyalty to Marwān and his governor al-Naḍr.⁵⁹⁸

In Iraq, al-Naḍr contested ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar on the one hand, while Yazīd b. ʿUmar b. Hūbayra fought on the other with al-Ḍaḥḥāk al-Khārījī. Meanwhile, Marwān himself fought Sulaymān b. Hishām who gathered the Yemen around him to depose Marwān and to take revenge from Muḍar. Sulaymān successfully won the support of the Syrian army, the Dakwānīya and other Yemen tribes. Sulaymān's army consisted of about seventy thousand soldiers in Qinisrīn. Marwān attacked Qinisrīn and defeated Sulaymān's army after a furious battle. About thirty thousand soldiers of Sulaymān's army, along with his eldest son Ibrāhīm and Khālīd b. Hishām al-Makhzūmī, uncle of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik, were killed in the battle. Sulaymān b. Yazīd fled to Ḥimṣ to establish a new alliance against Marwān. On the other hand, Ibn Hubayra crushed the force of the Khārījīs and killed the leading commanders of al-Ḍaḥḥāk, such as al-Muthannā b. ʿImrān at ʿAyn al-Tamar. However, the conflict between al-Naḍr and ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar continued. Al-Ḍaḥḥāk observed the conflict and marched to Kufa. In this situation, ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar asked al-Naḍr to stop fighting with each other and to form an alliance against the Khārījīs. Al-Naḍr refused to make any alliance unless ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar accepted his governorship of Iraq. Al-Ḍaḥḥāk fought with ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar and defeated his army.

⁵⁹⁸ *ibid.*, 341/4.

ʿAbd Allah fled to Wāsiṭ where furious clashes took place between them until al-Ḍaḥḥāk established his authority in Kufa. In this situation, they stopped fighting and prepared themselves to form an alliance against al-Ḍaḥḥāk. However, at this stage, the defeated prominent Yemenī leaders such as Maṣṣār b. Jamhūr, urged ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar to change his war policy. He insisted on forming an alliance with al-Ḍaḥḥāk to end Marwān’s rule. Meanwhile, Sulaymān b. Hishām was also defeated in the battle of Khusāf and came to Iraq with some of his Yemenī followers. Having discussed the issue with their followers, both ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar and Sulaymān b. Hishām then went to al-Ḍaḥḥāk to extend their oath of allegiance to him, also agreeing to work together against Marwān and his Muḍarī fellows.⁵⁹⁹ The alliance of ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar, Sulaymān b. Hishām and al-Ḍaḥḥāk al-Khārījī was established in Shawwāl, 127 AH.⁶⁰⁰

Ibn Athīr’s reports show that he considers the ʿaṣabīya as one of the most important factors in the fall of the Umayyads; however, his elaboration is comparatively more comprehensive. He also elaborates how the religious movements took advantage of the tribal conflict. Compared to al-Yaʿqūbī and al-Masʿūdī, Ibn Athīr seems sympathetic to the Umayyads, since in contrast to the earlier historians al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Ṭabarī and al-Masʿūdī, he devoted more space to elaborating on the tribal factor; although the basic framework of his historiography is based on al-Ṭabarī’s work.

Ibn Khaldūn applied his theory of ʿaṣabīya to the study of the Umayyads. He asserts that the Marwānid branch of the Umayyad managed successfully to establish their authority by utilising their family ties and blood relationships. They appointed many of their relatives to high positions to integrate them and to share the authority among all members of the royal family. Through maintaining strong ties with the Syrian Kalb tribes and harmonizing the balance of power between the Yemen and Muḍar in the rest of the state, they established their supremacy over the other competitors. The ʿaṣabīya became weak during the later Umayyad period and conflict emerged on a tribal basis. Ibn Khaldūn records that the conflict between the Muḍar and Yemen became stronger and more evident. Besides these tribal conflicts, many ideologically-based movements emerged.

⁵⁹⁹ *ibid.*, 340-343/4. Note that on this occasion, a Kharijī poet said: “Have you not seen that God’s religion is now dominant? You can see that the Quraysh offered prayers behind an imām of Bakr b. Wāʿil” (Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 340/4.).

⁶⁰⁰ Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 343/4.

They took advantage of these tribal hostilities and organized their movements more actively. Khurāsān is the best example for this kind of study. Ibn Khaldūn collected most of the material for his historiography from al-Ṭabarī but presented the history in the light of his theory of *‘aṣabiya*.

Hishām failed to appoint a suitable governor of Khurāsān who could work to minimise tribal rivalries and stabilise the region. He dismissed Asad’s administration in 109 AH,⁶⁰¹ and appointed al-Ḥakam b. *‘Awāna* al-Kalbī. Al-Ḥakam was then replaced by Ashras b. *‘Abd Allah* al-Sulamī and ordered to run affairs in consultation with Khālīd, the governor of Iraq. Hishām then replaced Ashras with al-Junayd b. *‘Abd al-Raḥmān* al-Murrī in 111 AH,⁶⁰² but dismissed al-Junayd when he discovered that Al-Junayd had married the daughter of Yazīd b. al-Muhallab in 116 AH, and replaced him with *‘Aṣim* b. *‘Abd Allah* b. Yazīd al-Hilālī. There was great rivalry between *‘Aṣim* and al-Junayd.⁶⁰³ All these events show that Hishām was unable to find a suitable person who could meet the challenges of that period.⁶⁰⁴ This was the time when the *‘Abbāsīd* movement flourished in Khurāsān while *‘Aṣim* punished all those who were part of al-Junayd’s administration. Ḥārith b. Shurayḥ rebelled against the Umayyad rule in Khurāsān. He called the people to the Book of God and Sunnah of his Prophet and allegiance to the Hāshimids. Although al-Ḥārith was killed, peace and harmony was not achieved. In 117 AH, *‘Aṣim* informed the central government of Damascus about the weakened state of affairs in Khurāsān. Hishām attached Khurāsān with Iraq and asked Khālīd to appoint his brother Asad to maintain law and order in the region.⁶⁰⁵ Asad, contrary to his previous experience, prepared a team who not only suppressed the rebel movement but also initiated a campaign of conquest in the frontiers of Khurāsān, with Naṣr b. Sayyār and al-Kirmānī b. *‘Alī* contributing actively to this campaign.⁶⁰⁶ Asad died in Rabī‘ al-Awwal 120 AH. Ja‘far b. Ḥaṇṣala al-Nahrawānī replaced him and served for a period of four months after which Naṣr b. Sayyār was appointed as governor of Khurāsān in Rajab.

⁶⁰¹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-‘Ibar*, 89/3.

⁶⁰² *ibid.*, 91/3.

⁶⁰³ *ibid.*, 94/3.

⁶⁰⁴ *ibid.*, 91-94/3.

⁶⁰⁵ *ibid.*, 95/3.

⁶⁰⁶ *ibid.*, 94-99/3.

Ibn Khaldūn admired the administrative abilities of Naṣr b. Sayyār, who, however, in contrast to Asad, was unable to maintain a balance of power in the tribes. He consolidated the domination of Muḍar in the province by he appointing Muḍarīs throughout the area – for instance, Muslim b. °Abd al-Raḥmān in Balkh; Wishāḥ b. Bukayr b. Wishāḥ in Marw; al-Ḥārith b. °Abd Allah b. al-Ḥashraj in Hirāt; Ziyād b. °Abd al-Raḥmān al-Qasrī in Nishāpūr; Abū Ḥafṣ °Alī b. Ḥaqna in Khawārzam and Qaṭan b. Qutayba in al-Ṣaghād. Ibn Khaldūn also notes that a unique Muḍarī force was established in Khurāsān.⁶⁰⁷ Similarly, tribal conflict emerged in Iraq where the Muḍarīs extended their power after the removal of Khālīd b. °Abd Allah al-Qasrī from his office. Yūsuf b. °Umar al-Thaqfī was appointed governor of Iraq and Yūsuf assembled Muḍarīs around him, imprisoned Khālīd and his administrators, and punished them severely.

When al-Walīd became caliph, he confirmed the governorship of Naṣr b. Sayyār in Khurāsān. This was the period during which the °Abbāsīd movement thrived in Khurāsān. With the arrival of al-Walīd, many leading members of the old regime were replaced, and more Muḍarīs were installed along with Naṣr b. Sayyār and Yūsuf b. °Umar al-Thaqfī. The Muḍarīs gained such strength that al-Walīd handed Khālīd b. °Abd Allah al-Qasrī over to Yūsuf, who killed him. This was the moment when the hostilities between the Muḍarīs and Yemenīs intensified. The Umayyads' power was based on their Yemenī nobles and the Syrian army, since it consisted predominantly of the Yemenī and Quḍā'a tribes. They were marginalized during al-Walīd's period and were infuriated by the assassination of Khālīd al-Qasrī. They therefore assembled around Yazīd b. al-Walīd to take the oath of allegiance.

Ibn Khaldūn considers that Yazīd took advantage of the situation. With the assistance of Yemenīs and Quḍā'īs, Yazīd attacked Damascus. °Abd °Azīz b. al-Ḥajjāj b. °Abd al-Malik and Maṣṣūr b. Jamhūr also accompanied him in the assault. With the ascendancy of Yazīd, the tribal conflict continued in a variety of ways. The Yemenīs came to power along with the qadarīs. Yūsuf b. °Umar was dismissed from Iraq and Maṣṣūr b. Jamhūr was appointed as governor. Maṣṣūr supported Yazīd because of the latter's affinity to the Ghaylāniya.⁶⁰⁸ Furthermore, Maṣṣūr had great

⁶⁰⁷ *ibid.*, 100/3.

⁶⁰⁸ The Ghaylaniya were the followers of Ghaylān al-Dimashqī, the leading scholar who presented the theory of Qadar.

antipathy towards Yūsuf b. ʿUmar because he had killed Khālīd al-Qasrī. Maṣṣūr's ambition was to take revenge on Yūsuf and his ʿummāl (administrators). He ordered the Syrian troops to arrest ʿUmar and his ʿummāl when he reached Ḥīra. He then arrested Yūsuf and sent him to Syria, and also dismissed Naṣr b. Sayyār from Khurāsān and appointed his brother in Khurāsān. A conflict began to arise between the Muḍarīs and Yemenīs. Yūsuf b. ʿUmar was put in prison with the sons of al-Walīd, and Naṣr was dismissed from Khurāsān but refused to hand over authority. Yazīd observed the situation and in order to maintain the equilibrium between the Muḍar and Yemen, appointed ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz as governor of Iraq. ʿAbd Allah then appointed Naṣr b. Sayyār in Khurāsān.⁶⁰⁹

Similarly, a conflict emerged between Naṣr and Jadī b. ʿAlī al-Kirmānī although they had worked adequately together under Asad's governorship. However, when Naṣr was appointed as wālī in Khurāsān, he expelled al-Kirmānī. Therefore, al-Kirmānī came into conflict when ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar appointed Naṣr in Khurāsān. Naṣr arrested al-Kirmānī and put him in prison in 126 A.H. Al-Kirmānī fled from prison and gathered three thousand soldiers of his Azad tribe around him. The Azad tribe had already taken an oath of allegiance to ʿAbd al-Malik b. Ḥarmala on the Book of God and the Sunnah of His Prophet. Therefore, ʿAbd al-Malik welcomed al-Kirmānī. Observing Khurāsān's critical situation, the central government of Damascus extended a reconciliation policy. Sālīm b. Aḥwar, as a representative of Naṣr, intervened and urged al-Kirmānī to leave Khurāsān and prepared him to leave for Jurjān. The conflict was still unresolved and negotiations for peace were in process. At this critical moment, Yazīd b. al-Walīd died at the end of 126 A.H.

Ibrāhīm b. al-Walīd succeeded him, but according to Ibn Khaldūn, he was weak. Marwān b. Muḥammad, governor of Armenia, organized a movement against the ruling party in Damascus for killing a legitimate caliph, al-Walīd b. Yazīd, and was well supported by the Muḍarīs. Ibrāhīm dispatched an army of one hundred and twenty thousand soldiers. under the leadership of Sulaymān b. Hishām. against Marwān's army of eighty thousand. Sulaymān asked him to be reconciled and to begin peace negotiations as well as to withdraw his ambition to seek revenge for al-Walīd, and demanded the release of al-Ḥakam and ʿUthmān in order to restore their position as

⁶⁰⁹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*, 113/3.

successors of al-Walīd. The negotiations failed and a battle began between them, which was enthusiastically fought and won by Marwān. The prominent leaders, such as Yazīd b. al-°Aqqār and al-Walīd b. Maṣād, were captured and killed in prison. Yazīd b. Khālīd al-Qasrī observed the defeat and fled to Damascus to discuss the matter with Ibrāhīm and °Abd al-°Azīz b. al-Ḥajjāj. They decided to kill both brothers al-Ḥakam and °Uthmān, and it is assumed that when Marwān was taking the oath of allegiance to al-Ḥakam and °Uthmān, they were being killed in the prison. Yazīd b. Khālīd al-Qasrī also killed Yūsuf b. °Umar al-Thaqfī in the prison. Marwān was shocked to see the dead bodies of both brothers upon his arrival in Damascus. Abū Muḥammad al-Sufyānī was released from prison and told the people that al-Ḥakam had nominated Marwān as successor in his will. He stepped forward and took an oath of allegiance to Marwān and the people then followed him.

The tribal conflict reached its zenith during Marwān's time. Marwān, with all of his extraordinary qualities could not minimize the tribal hostilities. The dynamics of Khurāsān's politics revolved heavily around tribal conflict. Marwān appointed Yazīd b. °Umar b. Hubayra as governor of Iraq. Yazīd confirmed the post of Naṣr as wālī of Khurāsān, which meant that the Muḍarīs would have authority in new regime. Consequently, the Yemenī devised an alternative policy. Al-Ḥārith b. Shurayḥ formed an alliance with al-Kirmānī against Naṣr b. Sayyār. Naṣr assured al-Ḥārith b. Shurayḥ that his amnesty had been granted but that he did not believe it. Naṣr attacked Marw and defeated al-Kirmānī; and on his return, a rumour spread that Naṣr b. Sayyār had been killed. Ibn Khaldūn notes that a man called to the people, "O group of Rabī°a and Yemen! Abū Sayyār is killed and Muḍar is defeated."⁶¹⁰ The forces of al-Kirmānī and al-Ḥārith retaliated and defeated Naṣr, and Al-Kirmānī established his authority in Marw and plundered the people. The adherents of al-Ḥārith criticized al-Kirmānī's policy of looting and discrimination. They argued that they had fought to restore justice, not to adhere to °aṣabīya and tribalism. Al-Ḥārith asked Al-Kirmānī to resolve the issue through dialogue and negotiation, but al-Kirmānī did not accept this. Thus, conflict arose amongst them and al-Kirmānī finally killed al-Ḥārith and defeated his army.⁶¹¹

⁶¹⁰ *ibid.*, 121/3.

⁶¹¹ *ibid.*, 121/3.

After al-Ḥārith's death, a multi-dimensional conflict emerged in the region and Naṣr intended to take advantage of the situation. Al-Kirmānī desired to consolidate his power while Yaḥya b. Naʿīm al-Shaybānī in Rabīʿa, Muḥammad b. Muthannā in al-Azad, and al-Ḥarbī al-Sughdī contested power on tribal and ideological bases. They fought each other continuously but while they were busy with internal conflicts, Abū Muslim Khurāsānī was building his strength to dominate the ʿAbbāsīd movement. He took advantage of the situation and attempted to ensure that the conflict started. He sent his preachers to Muḍar who condemned the Yemen, and dispatched some others to the Yemen who denounced the Muḍar. Neither al-Kirmānī or Shaybān al-Khārījī hated Abū Muslim because he had called for the removal of Marwān from the throne.⁶¹² Thus, in Ibn Khaldūn's opinion, the tribal conflict prepared the stage for the ʿAbbāsīd movement and led the Umayyads to their decline.

6.3.2 Concluding Note

It seems that al-Yaʿqūbī did not consider the tribal conflict as a crucial factor in the demise of the Umayyads; rather it was the advent of the ʿAbbāsīd movement that led the Umayyad regime to collapse. Al-Yaʿqūbī briefly mentioned the tribal conflict between Khālīd al-Qasrī and Yūsuf al-Thaqfī, and between al-Kirmānī and Naṣr. However, it was the murder and martyrdom of Zayd b. ʿAlī and his son Yaḥyā b. Zayd that provided the foundations for the ʿAbbāsīd revolution in Khurāsān that eventually caused the fall of the Umayyads. It was Abū Muslim Khurāsānī who took advantage of their internal conflict, which became tribal only during the third civil war. On the issue of Khālīd al-Qasrī it seems that al-Ṭabarī's account is a replica of al-Yaʿqūbī's version. Al-Ṭabarī also considered the Shiʿī movement in Khurāsān to be a key factor in the demise of the Umayyads, rather than the tribal factor. In a way, the conflict between Khālīd al-Qasrī and Yūsuf al-Thaqfī and between Naṣr and al-Kirmānī was central since their internal conflict provided grounds for the reception of the Shiʿī propaganda of Abū Muslim and the Abbasid movement.

As far as al-Masʿūdī is concerned, he did not mention any tribal hostility between Khālīd al-Qasrī and Yūsuf al-Thaqfī. He gave accounts of the deaths of Zayd and Yaḥyā and mentioned that Zayd was killed by Yūsuf, and Yaḥya was killed by Naṣr, without relating this to the other events. He

⁶¹² *ibid.*, 124-125/3.

argued that Naṣr's governorship of Khurāsān was remarkable. Naṣr b. Sayyār cautioned Marwān II that Abū Muslim's movement was flourishing in Khurāsān and that this had the potential to destroy the rule.⁶¹³ Thus, it can be deduced from the presentation of al-Mas'ūdī that the 'aṣabīya factor was not central to the demise of the Umayyads. It seems that his opinion is also identical to that of his predecessor historians.

Ibn Athīr's al-Kāmil is also a significant source for Umayyad history. His illustration of the later Umayyads is comparatively more inclusive and comprehensive. He derived most of his reports from al-Ya'qūbī and al-Ṭabarī, and attempted to construct a complete representation of the events that led to the fall of the Umayyads. He also elaborated the conflict between Khālīd al-Qasrī and Yūsuf al-Thaqfī, and Naṣr b. Sayyār and al-Kirmānī. Following al-Ya'qūbī and al-Ṭabarī, he argued that Abū Muslim Khurāsānī took advantage of the tribal conflict between the Muḍar and Yemen and accelerated the pace of the work for the Abbasid movement.

Ibn Khaldūn considers that the Umayyads consolidated their authority by making alliances with the Syrian Yemen/Kalb tribes and extending favours to various hostile tribes. Ibn Khaldūn clearly demonstrates that Umayyad power was based in the Yemenī tribes that shifted towards the Muḍar during the later Hishām era when Khālīd al-Qasrī was removed from the governorship of Iraq and Yūsuf b. 'Umar was appointed in his place. It was a crucial policy decision that changed the course of Muslim history. The Yemenī leader, Khālīd al-Qasrī, and his brother Asad al-Qasrī, endeavoured to maintain equilibrium and a balance of power between the Yemen and Muḍar tribes. Both al-Kirmānī b. 'Alī, a Yemenī and Naṣr b. Sayyār worked vigorously with Yūsuf without any tribal reference. However, when Khālīd al-Qasrī was dismissed from service and Yūsuf b. 'Umar was appointed in his place, his maltreatment of Khālīd al-Qasrī was, according to Ibn Khaldūn, the starting point for tribal conflict. This was the time when both Yūsuf b. 'Umar and Naṣr b. Sayyār attempted to extend the domination of the Muḍar in Iraq and Khurāsān.⁶¹⁴ Ibn Khaldūn relied mostly upon al-Ya'qūbī and al-Ṭabarī's traditions but through the application of the theory of 'aṣabīya, presented a more logical exposition of the Umayyad fall. However, all the historical

⁶¹³ al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, 438/2.

⁶¹⁴ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-Ibar*, 100-103/3.

sources noted above share one thing in that they are based on the Iraqī and Khurāsānian narrative of Umayyad history. Thus all of them anticipated the fall of the Umayyads under the Iraqī and Khurāsānian traditions.

Medieval sources offer a narrative of the fall of al-Walīd's rule that is consistent; and the consistency lies in its unity. Most of the early medieval historians based their works on his reports of al-Madā'īnī. Al-Ṭabarī is the main source for al-Madā'īnī, while later historians have drawn the events from al-Ṭabarī.⁶¹⁵ According to all of these sources, Khālīd's death and the conflict between the Qays and Yemen were not leading factors in the fall of al-Walīd. The most significant factor was al-Walīd's failure to construct a plausible religious persona. In short, his fall was not because of his policies or his mal-treatment of certain people; rather it was his moral deficit that contributed to his demise. Yazīd III attempted to bridge the moral gap by his religiosity. However, he could not maintain the tribal balance as he was backed by the Yemen. Consequently, tribal conflict influenced all socio-political and religious spheres of life.

The ʿAbbāsīd movement took advantage of the internal conflict and came into power with the assistance of their Khurāsānian fellows. Moreover, the ʿAbbāsīds fused a religious spirit into their political agenda. In this context, Ibn Khaldūn's ʿaṣabīya theory seems logical. The Umayyads lost control when the conflict emerged among members of the royal family. They were replaced by the Hāshimids who came into power with the help of non-Arabs and had thus to share authority with their non-Arabs supporters. Therefore, in contrast to the Umayyads, the ʿAbbāsīds could not enjoy absolute authority. Ibn Khaldūn argues that Muslim rule remained intact under the first four caliphs and under the Umayyads because of the unity of the Arab ʿaṣabīya. However, the Shīʿīs called for the rule of the Prophetic family and the Abbasids successfully managed to establish their rule.

Ibn Khaldūn maintains that the universal concept of the caliphate vanished when the Umayyads established their rule in Andalusia; it happened because the unity of the Arab ʿaṣabīya was fractured. Thus, two states came into being because of the disarray among the Arabs. It can be

⁶¹⁵ Ibn ʿAsākir did not generally rely on al-Ṭabarī's reports but he extracted al-Madā'īnī's reports from al-Ṭabarī for the account of al-Walīd's demise. Khalīfa b. Khayyāt and al-Azadī uncovered the reports regarding the Yemenīs' anger with Khālīd's cruel end, but they did reveal that the tribal conflict between the Qays and Yemen became a prime factor in the demise of rule.

observed that the rule of Islam, as Ibn Khaldūn argues, gradually became fragile and the Muslim state fractured into many small states, such as the Umayyads in Andalusia, Adārisa in the far west of North Africa, ʿUbaydiyya in Qayrāwān and Egypt, Qarāmiṭa in Baḥrīn, and so on. Ibn Khaldūn begins with a description of the role of Shīʿī in the establishment of Abbasid rule. This suggests that he considered aṣabīya as one of the most important factors in the fall of the Umayyads by providing a space where the Shīʿīs could play a role in bringing the Abbasids into power.⁶¹⁶ It can be concluded that Ibn Khaldūn’s theory of ʿaṣabīya is viable in understanding the causes of the Umayyads’ decline.

6.4 Internal Family Conflict in the pre-Modern Sources

Conflict among the members of the Umayyad family is a phenomenon of weak ʿaṣabīya. According to Ibn Khaldūn, the ʿaṣabīya is a source of power and authority in Bedouin and tribal society. Every member of the tribe enjoys and shares nobility because of his common family lineage.⁶¹⁷ As noted, ʿaṣabīya gradually becomes weaker, tends to last for four generations, and then declines.⁶¹⁸ The monarch or the chief cannot please all members of the tribe, so eventually they begin to oppose and ultimately to revolt against their own royal family. When there is loss of ʿaṣabīya or there is tribal conflict, solidarity becomes weak, thereby ending their authority.⁶¹⁹ We tend to study the pre-Modern sources to understand how they understood the role of conflict among the Umayyad family members in the disintegration of the Umayyads.

However there are conflicting references in the pre-Modern sources regarding the internal conflict among the Umayyad family members. The internal conflict of the Umayyads provoked the tribal conflict of Yemen and Muḍar. Al-Yaʿqūbī examines Hishām’s unfriendly relations with his would-be successor al-Walīd b. Yazīd, and how Yūsuf won the confidence of al-Walīd after the death of Hishām.⁶²⁰ There were serious disagreements between Hishām and al-Walīd and therefore when al-Walīd came to power, he dismissed all Hishām’s governors and deputies and punished them

⁶¹⁶ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*, 176/3.

⁶¹⁷ *ibid.*, 106-1.

⁶¹⁸ *ibid.*, 112-1.

⁶¹⁹ *ibid.*, 119-121-1.

⁶²⁰ al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 68/3.

mercilessly, with the exception of the governor of Iraq, Yūsuf b. ʿUmar. Al-Walīd actually found in the official record letters from the governors regarding Hishām in which they agreed to prevent al-Walīd's succession. However, Yūsuf b. ʿUmar advised Hishām to keep the will of succession as it was.⁶²¹

Al-Yaʿqūbī's text indicates that al-Walīd's hatred towards his predecessor Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik led him to fight against all governors and Hishām's supporters. His personal feuds gradually converted into a tribally-based factionalism, particularly in the conflict that emerged between the Yamanīs and Muḍarīs. Al-Yaʿqūbī regards the bad governance of al-Walīd b. Yazīd as a remote cause of the disintegration of the empire. Al-Walīd alienated the Yemenīs from the mainstream policy-making authorities. Ultimately the Yamanīs extended their strength to Yazīd b. al-Walīd who brought al-Walīd's rule to an end.⁶²² Similarly, al-Ṭabarī portrayed al-Walīd II as vindictive and malicious and as a man occupied with his own desires. Relations were not ideal between Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik and al-Walīd b. Yazīd, since Hishām did not consider al-Walīd a suitable successor and wished to nominate his own son Maslama. He attempted to present Maslama as a religious and pious candidate for the caliphate; and appointed him to perform hajj in 119 AH.⁶²³ Consequently, relations became complicated between them.

Hishām could not change the will of his late brother Yazīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik because he failed to convince the leading members of his family on this issue. However, he treated al-Walīd harshly which made him angry. Al-Ṭabarī recorded the reaction of al-Walīd b. Yazīd on the death of Hishām, noting that al-Walīd hurried to the capital and delegated his cousin al-ʿAbbās b. al-Walīd to control treasury matters. He incarcerated the officials of the previous regime, and also imprisoned the sons and close relatives of Hishām although he exempted Maslama b. Hishām because he had previously defended him in front of his father.⁶²⁴ Al-Walīd was particularly harsh with Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm, sons of Hishām b. Ismāʿīl al-Makhzūmī and the maternal uncles of Maslama b. Hishām. He tortured them and then handed them over to Yūsuf b. ʿUmar who killed

⁶²¹ *ibid.*, 71/3.

⁶²² *ibid.*, 538/2.

⁶²³ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 138/7.

⁶²⁴ *ibid.*, 216/7.

them ruthlessly. Al-Walīd II was angry with them because they had agreed with Hishām's proposal regarding the nomination of Maslama b. Hishām as his successor.⁶²⁵ Al-Walīd also abused Sulaymān b. Hishām physically by shaving his beard and head, then sent him to ʿAmmān where he remained in prison until al-Walīd's death.⁶²⁶ He also imprisoned Yazīd b. Hishām.⁶²⁷

His appointment and dismissal of administrators was mostly based on his personal likes and dislikes. He dismissed Ibrāhīm b. Hishām b. Ismāʿīl and his brother Muhammad, and appointed his own maternal uncles Yūsuf b. Muḥammad al-Thaqfī and ʿAbd al-Malik b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Thaqfī in Damascus. The fact is that al-Walīd's personal revenges lasted too long and he alienated and annoyed some important political figures. Al-Tabarī noted that the intensity of conflict gradually increased between the members of the royal family during the reign of al-Walīd II, and he records an important event that showed this. Al-Walīd II took a slave girl of the progeny of al-Walīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik into his custody. ʿUmar b. al-Walīd threatened al-Walīd II and asked him to return her to her owners, otherwise his army would have to face reprisals against his army.⁶²⁸ The dialogue clearly indicates that the conflict was serious among the royal family and they did not tolerate even trivial issues. Contrary to tradition, it had become easy to challenge the authority of the caliph.

It appears that a campaign had been initiated by a cousin of al-Walīd II and in particular, by the sons of al-Walīd I and Hishām and the dismissed elite of the previous regime. They questioned al-Walīd II's authority on political, military and religious grounds. One of the most striking references can be found in historical sources that indicate that the opponents of al-Walīd II were instrumental. They used religion as a weapon against al-Walīd II by criticising him on religious and moral grounds and accusing him of transgression, heresy and even non-belief.⁶²⁹ They had also written letters to the hundred main mosques regarding al-Walīd II's character. Yazīd b. al-

⁶²⁵ *ibid.*, 209-210/7.

⁶²⁶ *ibid.*, 232/7.

⁶²⁷ *ibid.*, 232/7.

⁶²⁸ *ibid.*, 232/7.

⁶²⁹ *The historical sources reveal their unfriendly relations. Moreover, al-Walīd was painted in the sources as a heretic. Al-Isfahānī in particular accused him of heresy and transgression and how he used to busy himself with drinking and listening to music and other prohibited activities. cf. Isfahānī, al-Aghānī, 21-22/2.*

Walīd's letter described his anger. He clearly rebelled against al-Walīd II, writing that he would not be willing to accept his authority. The people had high regard for Yazīd b. al-Walīd because of his piety and religious appearance. Thus, Yazīd successfully united all the forces that were against al-Walīd II. All the reports mentioned above regarding the conflict between the members of the royal family and the use of religion show that the conflict between family members was one of the important factors in the decline of the Umayyads since it provided a platform from which the anti-Umayyad forces were able to make a vigorous stand against them.

Moreover, this was the time when Marwān came to power on the basis of his al-Jazīrīan-based Qaysī army. The previous Syrian army had been based predominantly on the Yemen tribes and gathered around the key members of the previous regime. When Marwān appointed al-Naẓr b. Sa'īd al-Khurashī as governor of Iraq the Yemen gathered around 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar II. The Yemen army of Kūfa refused to accept the governorship of Al-Naẓr b. Sa'īd and joined 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar in Ḥīra. They instigated the Ibn 'Umar-led rebellion against the new governor. The anti-Marwān forces gradually assembled around Ibn 'Umar, particularly the leading members of the Kalb tribe and followers of the previous regime, such as Ismā'īl b. 'Abd Allah al-Qasrī with his tribe, Maṣṣūr b. Jamhūr, and al-Aṣṣagh b. Dawālah with his tribe. This disagreement between the leading members of the Umayyad house, and the division of the Umayyad army on a tribal basis, developed into a devastating conflict between them. The poets of these tribes played a significant role in spreading the antagonism and enraging them before the confrontation took place on the battle field.

In contrast to al-Ṭabarī, al-Mas'ūdī blamed Marwān b. Muḥammad. He argued that Marwān II killed Ibrāhīm and all of his adherents, such as 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Ḥajjāj, and Yazīd b. Khālīd al-Qasrī. Consequently, a weakness appeared in the Umayyad rule.⁶³⁰ It seems, in Mas'ūdī's view, that the religious factor played an important part in the removal of al-Walīd from his rule. It also brought Yazīd b. al-Walīd into power. However, al-Masādī asserted that Umayyad rule began to crumble when Marwān killed the leading members of the Umayyads and their allies, the Syrian elites. He further based his strength on the army of al-Jazīra that consisted of the Muḍar tribes,

⁶³⁰al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, 277/3.

while the traditional Syrian army was based on Yemenī tribes. This was the policy shift in the history of Umayyad rule and politics. The Syrian army was fractured and joined the anti-Marwān forces. Thus, a tribal conflict emerged between the Yemen and Nizār that, in Masʿūdī's opinion, was an important factor in the decline of the Umayyads.⁶³¹ According to his assessment, the Yemen were marginalised during Marwān's rule. One of the reasons for this was Marwān's close association with Muḍar as he was based in Harrān, the centre of Muḍarīs.

Al-Masʿūdī also revealed the impact of tribalism on Arabic literature and how it contributed to the decline of the Umayyads. He argues that the work of the leading Arab poets such as Kumayyat and Diʿbal Khuzāʿī played a vital role in tribal factionalism. The tribal conflict between the Nizār and Yemen appeared as a popular tradition that attracted the masses on a large scale during the period of Marwān. Al-Masʿūdī asserted that Marwān's rule and its Nizār-based army forced the Yemen towards the ʿAbbāsīd movement. As the Yemen switched their loyalty and began to support the ʿAbbāsids, the government consequently shifted to them as well. However, factionalism became a permanent feature of politics in the later centuries. All this debate confirms that al-Masʿūdī considered tribal factionalism as an important factor in the fall of the Umayyads.

The weakness of the Umayyad family was criticised particularly in Khurāsān where the Umayyads were vulnerable because of the rapid growth of the ʿAbbāsīd movement. Al-Masʿūdī asserted that Marwān II could not understand how to assist Naṣr b. Sayyār, or how to respond to the rebellions in Khurāsān. Al-Masʿūdī reported a long conversation between Naṣr b. Sayyār and Marwān on the issue of Khurāsān and concluded that Marwān's inability to cope with the situation in Khurāsān became the immediate cause of the fall of the Umayyads. Thus, according to al-Masʿūdī's assessment, the Khawārij and the internal conflict in the royal family and tribal factionalism were the remote causes of the disintegration of Umayyad rule while the most significant immediate factor was the successful movement of Khurāsān under the dynamic leadership of Abū Muslim Khurāsānī.

Ibn Athīr notes that conflict arose between the members of the Umayyad royal family, particularly between Marwān b. Muḥammad and Yazīd b. al-Walīd. When the former came to know about al-

⁶³¹ *ibid.*, 283-284/3.

Walīd b. Yazīd's death, Marwān declared that he would take revenge for the murdered caliph. He organized his forces, with the assistance of his son ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān, from Armenia, al-Jazīra, Mosel and Azerbaijan. However, when he reached Ḥarrān, he received a letter from Yazīd b. al-Walīd who confirmed the governorship of Marwān in Armenia, al-Jazīra, Mosel and Azerbaijan. Observing the situation Marwān took the oath of allegiance to maintain the unity of the Umayyads.⁶³² However, after the death of Yazīd b. al-Walīd, Marwān challenged the authority of Ibrāhīm b. al-Walīd and revolted against him, finally deposing him from his rule.⁶³³

Ibn Athīr's narrative is analogous to that recorded by al-Ṭabarī. Ibn Khaldūn also derives most of his historical account regarding al-Walīd II from al-Ṭabarī. That is to say, his description of al-Walīd b. Yazīd is analogous to that of al-Ṭabarī. He asserted that al-Walīd was not a suitable person to rule the caliphate. He was a dissipated and self-indulgent person who always remained occupied with drinking and keeping the company of immoral people.⁶³⁴ Like al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Khaldūn also asserts that Hishām had intended to dismiss al-Walīd from the position of his successor but could not do so because of his respect for the Umayyad tradition of succession and the nomination of a ruler. Ibn Khaldūn, however, reveals some traditions that, as mentioned above, depict a different picture of al-Walīd. Ibn Khaldūn argues that al-Walīd II did not stop his unethical and unscrupulous activities even after he became wālī (ruler) of the Umayyad rule. He asserts that many reports of immorality were attributed to him but a great number of people denied these accusations.⁶³⁵

Ibn Khaldūn issued two reports, one on the authority of al-Madāʾinī and the second on the authority of Shabīb b. Shabbah. The first suggests that al-Rashīd praised al-Walīd while he blamed Yazīd b. al-Walīd. The second shows that al-Mahdī rejected the notion that al-Walīd was an immoral person. Al-Mahdī asserted that because of the jealousy of the members of the Umayyad family

⁶³² Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 321-322/4.

⁶³³ *ibid.*, 323/4.

⁶³⁴ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*, 106- -110/3.

⁶³⁵ For instance, al-Dhahabī argued that all reports which described the infidelity and heresies of al-Walīd II were incorrect. He was known for his habit of drinking and sodomy and people rebelled against him because of his bad characteristics, but according to al-Dhahabī's assessment, these reports were wrong. For details see, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī: *Tārīkh al-Khulafāʾ*, 221.

and the envy of al-Walīd's cousins, his personality was painted as corrupt.⁶³⁶ Ibn Khaldūn further stated that al-Walīd II was charged with infidelity and heresy by sons of al-Walīd I because al-Walīd II had arrested many of the sons of al-Walīd I. Yazīd b. al-Walīd was the most important member of al-Walīd's family and was famed for his piety and faithfulness. Therefore, people were inclined to believe him. Secondly they criticised al-Walīd II because he had nominated his immature sons, al-Ḥakam and ʿUthmān as his successors. Ibn Khaldūn suggests that the most important factor was the Yemen's dissatisfaction because of what had happened with Khālīd al-Qasrī.

Similarly, the Qaḍāʿah tribe was also dissatisfied with al-Walīd because of his maltreatment of the Yemen tribes.⁶³⁷ The Syrian army consisted mainly of troops of the Yemen and Qaḍāʿah tribes. They gathered around Yazīd b. al-Walīd and urged him to lead them against the government. Ibn Khaldūn recorded that Yazīd took the advice of the members of his family but they advised him not to rebel against a legitimate ruler. It seems, in Ibn Khaldūn's view, that the conflict among the members of the Umayyad family was a significant factor. The leading members of the royal family such as al-ʿAbbās b. al-Walīd, elder brother of Yazīd III, and Marwān b. Muḥammad, did not favour rebellion against al-Walīd. ʿAbbās b. al-Walīd warned Yazīd to stop planning a rebellion against al-Walīd. Similarly, when Marwān b. Muḥammad came to know that Yazīd b. al-Walīd was secretly planning a rebellion against al-Walīd, he wrote a letter to Saʿīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik and expressed his concerns on the issue, pointing out that Yazīd III's plan to rebel against al-Walīd II was indeed a dangerous act that might create great chaos and controversy. The latter agreed with Marwān and wrote to ʿAbbās, the elder brother of Yazīd III. ʿAbbās asked Yazīd about the matter but he declined to accept any such allegation. Ibn Khaldūn described all this episode with detailed elaboration which suggests that the leading figures of the Umayyad house were not in favour of rebellion; but only Yazīd b. al-Walīd and some leading members of the Yemen tribe such as ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. al-Ḥajjāj, Manṣūr b. Jamhūr and Yazīd b. Khālīd al-Qasrī. However, it can be observed

⁶³⁶ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*, 109/3.

⁶³⁷ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*, 109-110/3.

that the conflict between the members of the Umayyad family generated the conflict between the Yemen and Muḍar. This conflict became a permanent feature of the late Umayyad rule.⁶³⁸

Ibn Khaldūn asserted that the ʿAbbasids took advantage of the situation. Abū Muslim attempted to create a situation where both parties continued fighting each other. It can be observed that Abū Muslim achieved his target successfully, when Naṣr killed al-Kirmānī and defeated his army. Al-Kirmānī's death gave Abū Muslim a high position. The defeated army of al-Kirmānī finally joined Abū Muslim, who then emerged as the most powerful leader of Khurāsān. The textual study of Ibn Khaldūn's historiography suggests that Marwān successfully eliminated all rebellions of the Khawārij, the opposition of members of the Umayyad family, such as Sulaymān b. Hishām, ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar and the union of anti-Muḍar, Yemenī elites, and the Shīʿī movement of ʿAbd Allah b. Muʿāwīya. However, he was unable to devise an appropriate policy to deal with the ʿAbbāsīd movement. Furthermore, the death of Naṣr in Rabīʿ al-Awwal 131 AH and the defeat and death of Ibn Ḍubārah in Rajab 131 AH damaged Marwān's strength in Khurāsān.⁶³⁹ Abū Muslim and Qaḥṭabah mounted successful campaigns against Yazīd b. Hubayra and Marwān and defeated them. On the basis of the textual study of Ibn Khaldūn, it can be inferred that the ʿAbbāsīd movement in Khurāsān was the immediate cause in the fall of the Umayyad while the internal family conflict and the tribal conflict were considered to be the actual cause of the fall of the Umayyads.

It can be concluded that Ibn Khaldūn based his historiography on the foundation of al-Ṭabarī's reports. Moreover, the pre-Modern historiographers focus mainly on the socio-political situation of Khurāsān where the ʿAbbāsīd movement played a central role in the disintegration of Umayyad rule. However, it can be observed that the pre-Modern sources validate the ʿaṣabīya theory of Ibn Khaldūn. The conflict among the members of the Umayyad family generated tribal conflict among the Arabs which resulted in the decline of the Arab kingdom of the Umayyads. Thus, the internal conflict within the royal family was perhaps one of the important causes in the fall of Umayyad

⁶³⁸ *ibid.*, 110/3.

⁶³⁹ *ibid.*, 130-131/3.

rule. The following section studies and analyses the various narratives of modern scholars on tribal conflict and its role in the fall of the Umayyads.

6.5 The Tribal Conflict and Internal Family Conflict in Modern Sources

Modern scholars have presented many theories in an attempt to identify the driving force of Umayyad history. As far as the ʿaṣabīya is concerned, they generally offered two exemplars: the tribal conflict paradigm and the ruling family paradigm. The tribal conflict paradigm basically concerns the conflict between the northern Arabs of Qays and the southern tribes of Yemen, while the ruling family conflict paradigm illustrates the conflicts among leading members of the ruling family that disrupted the existing system. The struggle between the princes and the way in which they exploited tribal discord to strengthen their power against one another was the central element in framing the course of history.⁶⁴⁰ The internal struggles among members of the royal family in the later Umayyad period are seen as contributing to the fall of the dynasty. There was rivalry between the different branches of the Umayyad family; competition for power was evident between brothers and cousins and each of them contested the leadership. It can thus be observed that the division among members of the royal family led to the division of the ruling elites. A series of clashes occurred between them which ultimately fractured the Empire completely. The Umayyads lost their tribal vigour and were consequently unable to maintain their rule and were replaced by a rival tribal group. Some modern scholars, for example Wellhausen, Hugh Kennedy, and Hawting argue that the internal family conflict and the tribal conflict were intertwined. They also agree that the role of various members of the Umayyad royal family was decisive in shaping

⁶⁴⁰ Cf. Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, and G.R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam* for standard treatments of tribal politics. Like Wellhausen, they intertwine tribal and family approaches. Note that Judd argues how, “in this conception, Umayyad is essentially reduced to a series of personal struggles between often flawed, occasionally tragic figures....while scholars disagree about whether the tribes or the princes propelled events, they generally agree that various Umayyad princes took sides in this struggle late in the Umayyads regime, sacrificing their elevated neutrality either out of necessity or as a result of their frantic competition for influence.” Judd, *The Third Fitna*, 2.

events in a particular direction but that most of the tribal conflicts emerged because of the backing of some important Umayyad family figures.⁶⁴¹

The tribal conflict paradigm traces the roots of tribal conflict in the ancient history of the Arabs where the northern Arabs of Qays and Southern Arabs of Yemen were the competing forces. The modern scholars illustrate their theory by explaining the historic tribal rivalries revealed in the chronicles especially in the history of al-Ṭabarī. These tribal conflicts played a central role in the decline of the Umayyad. The early Umayyad rulers successfully maintained the tribal balance and used their power to strengthen the rule. However, the latter rulers after of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 105/724-125/743) failed to keep the balance of power among these tribal forces which ultimately led them to collapse.

The roots of tribal conflict between the Qays and Yemen are found in pre-Islamic history. The genealogists divide the Arabs into two groups: (i) the descendants of Ismāʿīl or the northern Arabs, and (ii) the descendants of Qaḥṭān or the Southern Arabs. The historical sources labelled the southern Arabs, the descendants of Qaḥṭān, as ahl al-Yemen or al-Yamāniya; while the northern Arabs and the descendants of Ismāʿīl are recorded in the historical sources by different titles, such as ʿAdnāniya, Nizāriya, Muḍariya or Qaysiya. These titles are based on the genealogical roots of Ismāʿīl's descendants. ʿAdnān was the son of Ismāʿīl, Nizār the son of ʿAdnān, Muḍar the son of Nizār, and Qays was the son of Muḍar. This pre-Islamic division of Arabs was of great significance in the tribal hostilities that occurred during the Umayyad period. As Patricia Crone argues, “this division was of acute importance in the later Umayyad period in which the two descent groups would behave as rivals and engage in ʿaṣabiyya ‘partisan behaviour’.”⁶⁴² Contemporary scholars evaluated the tribal conflicts of the Northern and Southern tribes. In 1861 R. Dozy assessed the tribal feuds of the Arabs, arguing that the early Muslim Arabs had inherited the legacy and hostility of their predecessors from pagan times and therefore continued feuding even after they had

⁶⁴¹ See for details, Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom and its Fall*; Kennedy, *The Prophet*; Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*. For this approach particularly, see Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall*; Crone, *Slaves on Horses*; also Riḡād ʿIsā, *al-Nazāʿ*.

⁶⁴² Crone, Patricia, “Were the Qays and Yemen of the Umayyads Period Political Parties?”, *Islam*, 71 (1994) , 1.

adopted Islam.⁶⁴³ However, Wellhausen argues that there was no tradition of hostility between the southern and northern Arabs in the pre-Islamic period; the starting point of the tribal antagonism was the conflict between the Kalb (a Yemenī tribe) and Qays, during the Civil War of Marj Rāhiṭ in 684 CE.⁶⁴⁴

As an exponent of the tribal conflict paradigm, Jurjī Zaydan evaluates aṣabīya and its role during the Umayyad period. According to his accounts, the Yemenī-Muḍarī conflict was not a dominant feature during the Rāshidūn period, arguing that ʿAlī's strength was based on the Anṣār and his Yemenī supporters, whereas Muʿāwīya gathered his vigour from his Qurayshī adherents and his Yemenī relatives. This meant that Yemenīs could be found in both parties. However, Muʿāwīya had calculated his army and attempted to win the support of the Yemenīs with gifts and by encouraging relations with them. He also married within the tribe of Kalb, a branch of Yemenī tribes. Thus, when he came to power, he enjoyed the allegiance of both the Muḍar and Yemen tribes. After the death of Muʿāwīya, the Yemenīs supported Yazīd because he was their nephew on his mother's side. However, the tribal conflict became evident after Yazīd's death. The Yemenīs supported the Umayyads while Ibn Zubayr's strength was based on his Qays ancestry, which was a branch of Muḍar.

The battle of Marj Rahiṭ, according to Zaydan, was an excellent example of the Yemen-Mudar conflict. The Muḍar supported Ibn Zubayr while Yemen fought for Marwān in the battle. After this battle, the tribal conflict remained a dominant feature of the Umayyad period. The Yemenīs remained loyal to ʿAbd al-Malik while the Muḍar continued their hostility towards the Umayyads. When ʿAbd al-Malik consolidated his rule, then the Muḍar also accepted his authority but remained consistently hostile across the Arab Empire. Zaydan notes that

everywhere the two factions were represented, and each got the upper hand alternatively, with the changes in Caliphs, governors, and lieutenants. The Mudarite governor would promote Mudarites, the Yemenīte Yemenites. The balance was perpetually shifting. This distinction was of great

⁶⁴³ Dozy, R. *Histoire des musulmans d'Espagne*, (Leiden 1861), vol. 1, ch. 6; Hitti, P. *History of the Arabs*, (London: 1970, 10th ed. āfirst ed. published 1937ū), 280.

⁶⁴⁴ Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom*, 180f, 209f.

importance in every branch of the administration, and even affected the appointment and dismissal of Caliphs, governors.⁶⁴⁵

In Zaydan's view, the Yemen remained the vital force in Umayyad rule and the Qays always played a marginal role. Power shifted to the Qays during the time of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik, and the Qays became partisans of the Umayyad. After his death, when al-Walīd b. Yazīd, whose mother was a Qaysī, acceded to power, they gathered more strength.

Zaydan considers that the tribal conflict reached its zenith in this period. Marwān b. Muḥammad organized the Muḍarī forces to avenge the death of al-Walīd b. Yazīd. The Muḍarīs supported Marwān while the Yemenīs assisted the ʿAbbasids. Zaydan argues that the dignity of the Quraysh remained established during the Umayyad period. They were mainly divided between the Umayyad and Hāshimid families. It seems that Zaydan divided the Quraysh on a tribal basis. The Hāshimids were powerful in Ḥijāz while the Umayyads were strong in Syria. Thus, the Hāshimid and Umayyad families both had a prestigious position among the rest of the Arabs. As illustrated above, the Arabs were chiefly divided between the Yemen and Muḍar, and within these two factions were further divided into sub-sections. Zaydān argues that whenever a conflict arose between the Yemen and Muḍar in a province, the central government in Damascus used to appoint a Qurayshī to resolve the issue. Zaydān considers that this reflects the eminence of the Qurayshīs over other tribes.⁶⁴⁶

Zaydān believes that clan-feeling was one of the foundations of Umayyad politics, arguing that the Umayyad came to power through "the clan-feeling of the Kurashites, and pressing into their service the other clan-feelings."⁶⁴⁷ Umayyad rule was based on the clan-patriotism of the Quraysh and on winning partisans. With the expansion of the state, this policy could not deliver the required results and it caused the fragmentation of society which ultimately led to its disintegration and revolts,⁶⁴⁸ and tribal rivalries appeared in this context. The Qays favoured Marwān b. Muḥammad while the Yemenīs supported the ʿAbbāsids in their struggle against the Umayyads. Thus

⁶⁴⁵ Zaydan, *History of Islamic Civilization*, 67/4.

⁶⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 68/4.

⁶⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 63/4.

⁶⁴⁸ Zaydan, *History of Islamic Civilisation*, 138-141.

factionalism, according to Zaydan, was the most important factor in the demise of the Umayyads. The later Umayyad rulers failed to maintain the equilibrium between the power structure of the Qaysīs and Yemenīs. The Yemenīs, who had once been the primary military strength of the Umayyads disassociated themselves from Umayyad rule and supported the opponents of the Umayyads.⁶⁴⁹

Wellhausen also regards tribal factionalism as one of the most important factors in the fall of the Umayyads, and his book, *The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall*, is one of the most substantial works in the field and has had a considerable impact on subsequent studies. According to Wellhausen's investigations, pre-Islamic conflict between the Qays and Kalb incited the rebellions that occurred during the early history of the Muslims, and he traces the origin of such conflicts and rebellions from the historic conflict of Marj Rāhiṭ in the ʿAbd al-Malik period.⁶⁵⁰ He also asserts that the Umayyads' inability to present a substitute for the pre-Islamic ʿasabīya meant that the Arab tribes weakened their strength by fighting each other. This continuous tribal strife weakened the unity of the Arabs and the Arab cause was badly damaged. On the other hand, the conquerors attempted to unite among themselves by forging alliances with those who were in opposition to the Umayyads.

G. R. Hawting attempts to justify Wellhausen's thesis, asserting that his own work "is certainly not intended to supersede *The Arab Kingdom*".⁶⁵¹ However, he argues that it was not only tribal conflict but also conflict within the royal family that led to the Umayyads' decline. Hishām's successors could not resolve the conflict of the third fitna. The tribal conflict emerged initially because of the conflict within the royal family, but once it started it could not be stopped, even after the establishment of Marwān's rule. Hawting claims that the Kalb tribe of Yemenī origin supported Sulaymān against Marwān, but even when Sulaymān was defeated, the Kalb did not cease to struggle against the pro-Qaysī government of Marwān and instead joined the ʿAbbāsids.⁶⁵² Hawting asserts that the conflict among members of the royal family weakened the state and its

⁶⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 69.

⁶⁵⁰ Wellhausen, *Arab Kingdom and its Fall*, 201.

⁶⁵¹ Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, xix.

⁶⁵² *ibid.*, 96-97.

opponents; in other words the Khāwarij and Shi'is combined their forces against the Umayyads. He confirms the central role of conflict in the royal family in the demise of the Umayyad rule.⁶⁵³

Gabrieli considers that al-Walīd II harboured personal animosity against Khālīd al-Qasrī. However, the Umayyad princes and Yamanī elites considered this kind of treatment as part of a pro-Qaysī political agenda. Thus, the major divisions of the Syrian army declined to accept the authority of al-Walīd and gathered around other members of the royal family who were considered to be suitable as rulers. The Yemeni factor was therefore decisive in that it helped Yazīd III to present himself as an alternative candidate for the position of caliph. Gabrieli held al-Walīd responsible for the decline of the Umayyad rule since he failed to calculate the political and tribal implication of his actions against his personal enemies.⁶⁵⁴

Dennett also criticises Hishām because of his inability to nominate his own son for his succession in place of al-Walīd II who was not suitable for the caliphate.⁶⁵⁵ Dennett asserts that Yazīd III was responsible for the fall of the Umayyads because he undermined the legal authority of the caliphate institution. He took the oath of allegiance to al-Walīd II and then violated it without any legal justification. Yazīd III actually rejected the traditional authority patterns and presented his own political programme which was “almost pure Khārijism”.⁶⁵⁶ His rebellion suggested that the oath of allegiance to a legitimate ruler was an insignificant act. This was clearly a violation of the fundamental principle of Umayyad rule. Furthermore, Yazīd III’s reform policy restricted the caliph in the exercise of his absolute authority to resolve issues.⁶⁵⁷

Dennett argues further that the internal conflict between the members of the royal family tore down the unity of the Syrian army, which was the primary source of Umayyad rule. The Umayyad government was decentralised and the provinces were semi-autonomous, and in this context, the Syrian troops had provided them with cohesion and harmony; however, the internal family conflict shattered the unity and superior authority of the Syrian army. Yazīd’s rebellion provided the

⁶⁵³ *ibid.*, 105.

⁶⁵⁴ Gabrieli, *al-Walīd*, 17-19.

⁶⁵⁵ Dennett, *Conversion*, 201.

⁶⁵⁶ Dennett, *Marwān*, 201, 220.

⁶⁵⁷ Dennett, *Conversion*, 220.

platform for such activities, and when Marwān b. Muhammad came to power the exhausted and crumbling consensus of the Syrian army was replaced by the Jazirian army. Dennett praised Marwān b. Muḥammad for his military and political wisdom. He successfully shifted the power from Damascus to Jazīra with the help of his Jazirian-based troops.⁶⁵⁸ In this way, the long-established military and political strength of Umayyad rule changed. Dennett argues that the breakdown of the traditional Syrian army authority was the real cause of the destruction of Umayyad rule and that the role of the ʿAbbāsīd movement did no more than fill the vacuum.⁶⁵⁹ Moreover, he identifies the decentralised structure of the Umayyad administration as one of the significant factors in the demise of the Umayyads. The central government of Damascus was dependent on the financial share given to it by the semi-autonomous provinces, and the central government had, moreover, to rely upon the Syrian army which had lost its strength after the death of al-Walīd II.⁶⁶⁰ Dennett concludes that the ʿAbbāsīd movement was not the real cause of the Umayyad fall; rather, it was the destruction of the traditional Syrian army that gave the ʿAbbāsīds the opportunity to destroy Umayyad rule.⁶⁶¹

Like Dennett, Shaban also criticises some of Wellhausen's assertions, arguing that Wellhausen interpreted all the important events of the Umayyad period in the context of pre-Islamic tribal conflicts, whereas socio-economic interests were the driving force behind the events. He further asserts that it is illogical to explain all events on the basis of Arab tribal jealousies without considering their ability to adjust to new socio-political conditions.⁶⁶² Shaban believes that these socio-economic interests played an important role in shaping events, from the tribal conflict to the conflict among members of royal family,⁶⁶³ and claims that Marwān II curtailed his opponents, particularly Sulaymān b. Hishām who joined the Khawārij, his private mawālīs army, and ʿAbd Allah b. Muʿāwiya with his Shiʿī followers.⁶⁶⁴ However, the mawālīs' demand for equal rights and

⁶⁵⁸ Dennett, *Marwān*, 247.

⁶⁵⁹ *ibid.*, 247.

⁶⁶⁰ *ibid.*, preface, 8-9.

⁶⁶¹ *ibid.*, 276.

⁶⁶² Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom and its Fall*, viii.

⁶⁶³ Shaban, *Islamic History*, 153.

⁶⁶⁴ *ibid.*, 161.

their dissatisfaction with the Arab settlers over the war policy of the later Umayyads created the opportunity for the people of Khurāsān to rebel.

Shaban notes that the tribal rivalries were in fact based on the policy of war. The Qaysīs were in favour of expansion, while the Yemenīs were against the expansionist policy and demanded the conferring of equal rights for the mawālī and assimilation with the local population. The Yemenīs' policy of assimilation was fascinating to the Arab settlers as it secured their economic interests. Thus, the opponents of Umayyad rule, particularly the ʿAbbāsids, initiated their movement on the issue of equal rights and the assimilation of non-Arabs into the Muslim community. Shaban argues that the socio-economic interest of various tribes played a significant role in the fall of the Umayyads, and that "it is absurd to interpret this conflict as simply a tribal squabble"⁶⁶⁵ rather the tribes of Qays/Muḍar and Yemen standing for political parties of the Marwānīd period (684-750CE). The Muḍarīs were the adherents of an expansionist policy of the state and were not in favour of the assimilation of non-Arabs. On the other hand, the Yemenīs were against the policy of expansion in favour of the assimilation of non-Arabs. Al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqfī, the governor of Iraq during the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik and Walīd I, as well as the majority of the governors during the Marwānīd period, were from the Qays. Then Sulaymān b. ʿAbd al-Malik and ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz favoured the policies of the Yemenīs and won their support. Although the Yemenīs governed Iraq during Hishām's period they were finally marginalised and ousted from state affairs. These Yemenīs agitated against al-Walīd b. Yazīd and favoured Yazīd b. al-Walīd. During the period of the 740s, Shaban argues, the ʿaṣabīya between the Yemenīs and Muḍarīs governors reached in its zenith. The Qaysīs gathered around Marwān II and upheld his authority and as a result, the Yemenī joined the Abbasids to achieve their political objectives.⁶⁶⁶

In Shaban's view, both the tribal conflict and the ruling family conflict paradigms were artificial. In fact, the imperial policy paradigm played a central role in shaping events during that period. He focused particularly on the expansionist policy and the treatment of non-Muslims, and according to him, the Qays and Yemen were convenient labels for parties with different policies regarding

⁶⁶⁵ *ibid.*, 120.

⁶⁶⁶ Shaban, *Islamic History*, 119ff, 123, 142, 156, 157.

the rule of the empire. On the basis of the above discussion, it is clear that Shaban disagrees with Wellhausen's argument.⁶⁶⁷

Patricia Crone, another expert on the Umayyad period, asserts that Shaban's argument that the Muḍar and Yemen were political parties is a fallacy and that they were basically tribal groups rather than political parties. She argues the following:

practically all belonged to the parties to which their nisbas assigned them; membership to the supposed political parties was overwhelmingly determined by descent. What is more, exceptions are hard to come by before the Civil War: in ʿaṣabiyya on behalf of, or between Qays/Muḍar and Yemen before 744, the protagonists seem always to have sided with the party to which they belonged by descent.⁶⁶⁸

Crone presented detailed accounts of the governors of the Umayyad period. The data shows, contrary to Shaban's argument, that the Qays/Muḍar and Yemen were not political parties on the basis of their differences of opinion regarding an expansionist policy or assimilation. The Marwānids appointed governors from both tribes without any discrimination.⁶⁶⁹ Crone's work is considered to be the best critique of Shaban's thesis regarding the interest groups who based their argument on the tribal conflicts. She argues that Shaban's thesis is invalid. In this context, she also refers to Wellhausen who argued that there was no documentary evidence regarding the conflict between the northern and southern tribes prior to the battle of Marj Rāhiṭ (684 CE).⁶⁷⁰ She further criticises Shaban's argument that the rivalry between Qays/Muḍar and Yaman is unlikely to have remained a purely tribal episode during the Umayyad era.⁶⁷¹ Shaban asserts that these tribal groups were basically political parties of the Marwānid period (684-750 CE). The Qays supported the programme of military expansion and the segregation of Arabs and non-Arabs, whereas the Yemen were against the expansionist policy and demanded the assimilation of non-Arab converts to Islam in Muslim society. Shaban argues that the majority of the Marwānid caliphs appointed Qaysī

⁶⁶⁷ Shaban, M. A., *Islamic History*, esp. 100-137. Note that the jihad policy and treatment with the non-Arabs has been well illustrated in Khalid Blankinship's work.

⁶⁶⁸ Crone, 'Were the Qays and Yemen', 5.

⁶⁶⁹ *ibid.*, 28-31.

⁶⁷⁰ *ibid.*, 3.

⁶⁷¹ *ibid.*, 3.

governors for their expansionist policy except those who were not enthusiastic about expansion, like Sulaymān and ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. Shaban maintains that Hishām also reduced the Yamanī role in politics, particularly after the dismissal of Khālīd al-Qasrī. Consequently, the Yemenis staged a coup against al-Walīd II and installed Yazīd III to the throne in 744. The Yemenis were defeated again by Marwān II who came into power with the help of Qaysīs. At this stage, the Yemenis supported the ʿAbbāsids, who were in favour of the policy of assimilation of Arab and non-Arab in Islam.⁶⁷²

Crone criticises Shaban's argument and, having collected data about all the governors appointed during the Umayyad period which suggested that there was no particular policy in that respect, asserts that the historical sources do not validate his analysis. Shaban's argument seems valid only for the time of the third fitna,⁶⁷³ when Yazīd III's power was exclusively based on Yemen while Marwān was completely dependent on the Qaysī forces.⁶⁷⁴ Crone also rejects Shaban's assertion regarding Sulaymān's non-expansionist approach, arguing that Sulaymān continued the foreign and expansionist policies of his predecessors. Yazīd b. Muhallab persisted in continuing to expand in the frontiers of Khurāsān. Similarly, the policy of conquering western India was carried out without any change during the period of Sulaymān.⁶⁷⁵ Contrary to Shaban's opinion, Crone asserts that Yazīd III's reforms were basically "Qadarite convictions than his Yemenī associations and this is the one and only occasion on which a convergence between Qadarism and Yemenism is attested."⁶⁷⁶

Blankinship, another revisionist, extends Shaban's argument in a simplistic manner, arguing that in contrast to the tribal conflict paradigm, the change in imperial policy damaged the state which had been established as a Jihād state since the early period of Islam. Military expansion against the unbeliever was not only a financial source for the state but also conferred authority and legitimacy to rule; thus the failure of jihādī expansionist policies on the external front gave rise to

⁶⁷² *ibid.*, 4.

⁶⁷³ *ibid.*, 7-11, 12, 17, 18.

⁶⁷⁴ *ibid.*, 5.

⁶⁷⁵ *ibid.*, 19.

⁶⁷⁶ *ibid.*, 42.

the internal problems of the regime.⁶⁷⁷ Blankinship maintains that Hishām's successors attempted to reform the jihād policy and introduced many programmes to overcome the losses but it was too late to save the caliphate. The Umayyad army had to face a series of military defeats by non-Muslims during Hishām's reign which led the Umayyads into a serious financial crisis and a weakening of the Syrian army. Pre-existing tribal and provincial rivalries simply intensified the situation.⁶⁷⁸ Blankinship blames Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik for the fall of the caliphate because he continued his expansionist policies throughout his regime on almost all frontiers without observing the consequences, nor did the expansionist policy generated much to meet the military expenses. Consequently, the Umayyad caliphate became "a hollow shell, ruined by the expense its military excesses claimed in lives and wealth."⁶⁷⁹ Blankinship mentions many unsuccessful campaigns which placed an enormous fiscal burden on the state and required the imposition of heavy taxes to meet the army's requirements, and argues that continuous engagement in war weakened the Syrian army. The Muḍarī tribal forces of the Jazīra, who had been deprived of power around sixty years earlier in the battle of Marj Rāhit in 684 AD, took the opportunity to assert its own power. Thus, the failure of the state to devise a suitable jihād policy culminated in its destruction.⁶⁸⁰

Riyāḍ ʿIsām, an Arab revisionist scholar, argues that socio-political circumstance made Ibn Muʿāwiya the unifier of hostile groups under his leadership. The common fabric between them was hostility towards Marwān b. Muḥammad. There was no sincere intention in the slogan of establishing rule for the family of the Prophet. Riyāḍ gives a detailed account of socio-political movements of that period, noting that when Ibn Muʿāwiya came to Kufa to see ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar, he did not intend to confront Ibn ʿUmar. It was the Shiʿīs of Kufa who called on him to revolt against the Umayyads when they heard about the death of Yazīd b. al-Walīd and the internal conflict in the Umayyad house. They advised him that the Banū Hāshim had the right to rule rather than the Umayyads. Riyāḍ considers that Ibn Muʿāwiya's rebellion against Ibn ʿUmar was due to the support of the Shiʿīs of Kufa, and particularly the Shiʿī faction of the Zaydiya, who ousted the

⁶⁷⁷ Blankinship, *The End of the Jihād State*, 97-102.

⁶⁷⁸ *ibid.*, 9.

⁶⁷⁹ *ibid.*, 168.

⁶⁸⁰ *ibid.*, 97-102

ʿamil (deputy) of Ibn ʿUmar and took control of the citadel. They then marched to Hira where Ibn ʿUmar resided with his army. Ibn Muʿāwiya was defeated and forced to retreat into Persia.⁶⁸¹

Marwān b. Muḥammad was busy eliminating the elements of unrest in Syria, Egypt and other central provinces. Knowing Marwān's situation, and with the help of Yemenīs in Kufa and Hira, and Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qays, and with the support of his Khārījī fellows among the Banū Shaybān, Ibn ʿUmar consolidated his position in al-Jazīra and marched to Kufa where his forces confronted the Marwānids army of al-Naḍr b. Saʿīd al-Khurashī, which consisted of Muḍarīs. Upon the arrival of Ḍaḥḥāk, the armies of Ibn ʿUmar and al-Khurashī both stopped fighting and made a coalition to fight the Khawārij. However, the coalition forces were defeated. Ibn ʿUmar went to Wāsiṭ, a centre of Kalbīs and Qaysīs. Al-Khurashī, on the other hand, fled to Marwān b. Muḥammad. Al-Ḍaḥḥāk then pursued Ibn ʿUmar to Wāsiṭ and compelled him to accept his authority. Ibn ʿUmar agreed and duly pledged allegiance to him. Al-Ḍaḥḥāk then appointed him as wālī of al-Ahwāz and Fāris. Marwān consistently fought against al-Ḍaḥḥāk and finally killed him in 129 AH. After his death, all the anti-Umayyad opposition forces united under Ibn Muʿāwiya, but within a year Marwān II had defeated them all and by the end of 130 AH peace was restored.⁶⁸² Riyāḍ ʿIsām maintains that the tribal conflict between the Yemenīs and Muḍarīs in Khurāsān destabilised the government's authority and enabled the rise of the ʿAbbāsīd movement.⁶⁸³

Kennedy, another renowned revisionist, argues that Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik had successfully suppressed the tribal rivalries that re-emerged after his death and destroyed the Umayyad rule,⁶⁸⁴ and considers that the removal of al-Walīd by force had undermined the principles of succession: moreover, the Umayyads also lost their religious authority.⁶⁸⁵ He maintained that al-Walīd II's death was the immediate cause of the demise of the Umayyads' rule since the tribal feuds among the Qays and Yemen that had been suppressed during Hishām's reign re-emerged, which resulted in the destruction of the rule.⁶⁸⁶ Kennedy affirms the controversial personality of

⁶⁸¹ Riyāḍ ʿIsām, *al-Nizāʿ bayna Afrād al-Umwī*, (Damascus: Dār al-Iḥsān, 1406/1985), 192-194.

⁶⁸² Riyāḍ, *al-Nizāʿ*, 200.

⁶⁸³ *ibid.*, 202.

⁶⁸⁴ Kennedy, *The Prophet*, 105.

⁶⁸⁵ *ibid.*, 116-117.

⁶⁸⁶ *ibid.*, 105.

Yazīd III, who has been considered as either a virtuous reformer or a barefaced opportunist, and considers that tribal factionalism was one of the most important factors in the demise of Umayyad rule. He framed his discussion of the third civil war in terms of tribal animosities, with the Qays-Yemen conflict as its prominent feature, since Marwān suppressed the Yemenīs with the help of his Qaysī alliance.⁶⁸⁷ Kennedy also argued that the Umayyad dynasty declined and disintegrated because it lacked religious authority,⁶⁸⁸ and that good education played a central role in the rise and success of the Thaqafis under the Umayyads.⁶⁸⁹ Thus, Kennedy considers tribal conflict, economic crisis and the lack of religious authority of the late Umayyads as the significant factors in the fall of the Umayyads.

The modern scholars are, as noted, divided into two groups: the modern classical and the revisionist scholars. The modern classical scholars, including Zaydan and Wellhausen, consider that the tribal conflict between the Yemen and Muḍar played a central role in the decline of the Umayyads. The tribal conflict and breakdown of the traditional authority of the Syrian army provided an opportunity for the ʿAbbāsīd revolution. The revisionists on the other hand, including Dennett, Gabrieli, G.R. Hawting, Crone, Shaban and Kennedy, identify multiple factors that played a role in the decline of the Umayyads. They believe the paradigms of tribal conflict and conflict within the Umayyad house are intertwined and cannot be separated. Shaban and Crone present the tribal conflict and conflict within the house of the Umayyads in modern terms. Shaban argues that the Yemen and Muḍar were political parties and had their distinctive political agendas, whereas Crone's work is an attempt to reject Shaban's thesis. However, both agree that the tribal conflict played an important role in the decline of the Umayyads.

⁶⁸⁷ *ibid.*, 114-115.

⁶⁸⁸ *ibid.*, 116-117.

⁶⁸⁹ *ibid.*, 86.

6.6 The Role of ʿAṣabīya in the Umayyad Fall and Gramsci's Theory of Cultural Hegemony

Gramsci's theory of hegemony was constructed in the context of modern Western Europe. He argues that the hegemony of one group over society is based on consent; while coercion is applied occasionally on a small group of people at the time of rebellion. Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony is also applicable to an analysis of the phenomenon of tribalism during the Umayyad period. It would be helpful to determine the role of tribalism in undermining the authority of the Umayyads, and Gramsci's theory is highly relevant to an analysis of the tribal context of the Umayyads. They established their authority on the basis of their tribal strength and their capacity to make agreements and coalitions with their opponents. They extended their rule because of their strategy of coalition-building with coercion. The Yemen tribes of Syria were their traditional power base among the masses as well as in the armed forces. However, the early Umayyads had been careful to root their power amongst conflicting tribes in different parts of the dynasty and as such, they attracted interest groups of tribes and religious elites from all provinces into their political structure. In the Umayyads' historical perspective, the agreement between Muʿāwiya and Ḥasan was an attempt to unify the Arab Kingdom under one hegemon. Through this reconciliation, the Syrian political elite came to dominate the united dynasty.

Thus, it can be observed that Muʿāwiya's project of reconciliation was a hegemonic strategy. He consolidated his authority by combining consent with coercion. In a tribal society, he attempted to respect tribal norms in order to win over the masses. He maintained equilibrium between the conflicting and hostile tribes without ignoring the centrality of Syrian political and military elites. Thus, he constructed a hegemonic bloc that was able to integrate divergent tribes and groups of diverse interest. The Marwānids inherited this legacy from Muʿāwiya. They also came into power with the assistance of Syrian Yemen tribes and they also carried out Muʿāwiya's strategy; hence, they achieved hegemony because of their successful strategy of reconciliation and agreements. Thus, the masses accepted their hegemony with consent; however, when required, they took coercive measures.

Gramsci unfolds his concept of cultural hegemony by explaining the role of civil society. It is pertinent to understand the concept of civil society in order to explain how it is relevant to the

study of the Umayyads. Gramsci distils Marxist theory through devising his ideas of ‘hegemony’ and the ‘manufacture of consent’.⁶⁹⁰ He observes that society in capitalist states is divided into two sections: a political society which rules through force, and civil society which rules through consent. Gramsci’s concept of civil society differs from the modern concept of civil society according to which the public sector is voluntary and non-governmental organisations are considered to be civil society. Gramsci views civil society as a public sphere wherein political parties and trade unions acquire consciousness from the bourgeois state which serves as a vehicle to shape the ideas and beliefs for the public. The ideas of the bourgeoisie are propagated through media, universities, and religious institutions in order to ‘manufacture consent’. Thus the bourgeoisie maintain their hegemony when the civil society accepts their ideas as a norm of their cultural identities. Gramsci refers to hegemony as a form of control exercised by the dominant class. According to Marxist theory, the dominant class is a group which controls the means of production, and the subordinate class is a group of workers, the proletariat, who are compelled to sell their labour in order to survive. However, Gramsci argues that through moral and intellectual leadership, the dominant class has created a dominant culture which helps it to assert its authority over the subordinate class ethically, without coercion, while the subordinate class extends its consent and accepts an inferior position.

The concept of civil society is difficult to understand in the tribal structure. Perhaps the poets, religious scholars, and tribal leaders are part of civil society, even in a tribal set-up. These religious and tribal leaders play the role of the intellectuals to convince the masses to support the ruling class. Gramsci’s theory of hegemony is greatly relevant to the present study, particularly in the context of the relationship between civil society and the state. Gramsci recognizes the potential of the civil society to support or to threaten the state. He suggests that where there is a weak and divided civil society, ‘a war of movement’ is necessary to capture the state. A war of movement means a military struggle. In the absence of a strong civil society, the state cannot significantly maintain its control over matters; and the state has to use coercive apparatus to maintain its authority. However, where the civil society is strong and complex, and the ideology of the state is

⁶⁹⁰ Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebook*, 192.

deeply embedded in the institutions, the use of coercive power can be limited because the civil society convinces the majority of the people to extend their support to the ruling class with consent.

The sharp division between the Yemen and Muḍar tribes was a challenge for the ruling Umayyad elites. Both tribes attempted to have a maximum share in authority. The success of the early Umayyads was based on their strategy of a balance of power between the hostile tribes. In Gramscian terms, this is explained as the ‘national-popular’ dimension of hegemony, requiring “the unification of a variety of different social forces into a broad alliance expressing a national popular collective will.”⁶⁹¹ Further, the state’s ideology is significant in establishing the hegemony of the ruling class. Gramsci asserts that ideology must be capable of serving the interests of the ruling class. The ruling class always attempts to mobilize and encourage the intellectuals to transmit the state’s ideology among the masses to win their support in its favour.³

Gramsci believes that political movements devise various strategies to seize or maintain state power in different environments. He compares the success of Lenin in the Russian revolution with the possibilities of revolution in states in Western Europe. Socialist ideology and strategy were latent in the Russian context but remained unsuccessful in Western Europe where the capitalist ideology had a consensual basis combined with the state’s coercive apparatus. He asserts:

In Russia the State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West ... when the State trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The state was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks.⁶⁹²

Therefore, the civil society’s institutions helped the Western Europe states to maintain their hegemony against any direct revolutionary attack. The revolution in Western Europe was not possible without creating alternative ideological hegemony in civil society.⁶⁹³

Thus, in Gramscian understanding, the role of civil society is vital to the formation of hegemony in modern states. It is necessary to analyse the dynamics of a pre-modern society such as the Muslim society during the period of the Umayyads. In pre-modern societies, tribal and religious

⁶⁹¹ R. Simon, *Gramsci's Political Thought, An Introduction*, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1991), 25

⁶⁹² Gramsci, A Selections from the Prison Notebook, 238

⁶⁹³ *ibid.*, 181-182.

institutions formed complex and associational life. These tribal and religious movements played a significant role in threatening or bolstering the authority of the state.⁶⁹⁴ The Arab tribal system was intact during the Umayyad period and the tribes possessed strong military and economic resources. The early Umayyads attempted to consolidate their authority by creating an environment where the powerful tribes secured their socio-political and economic benefits. The Umayyads conferred their socio-political position to the Arab tribes over the non-Arabs. Therefore, the Arab hegemony over the non-Arabs was established. Perhaps the Arab tribes played a dual role in Gramscian understanding. The tribal allegiance meant military support as well as acceptance of authority with consent. Thus, power rested within society.

At this point, Gramsci's thinking is analogous with that of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *ʿaṣabīya* when he argues that authority consists of two inter-related components in the Bedouin tribal society. *Sulṭah* or rule is established on the basis of a tribe's *ʿaṣabīya*. In other words, authority is based on tribal strength whose close-knit members have strong blood ties with common interests. Secondly, the rule of a tribe is only maintained when other tribes recognise the superiority of that *ʿaṣabīya*. Thus, other tribal groups begin to acknowledge the pre-eminence and submit their political allegiance to that tribe. At that stage, the dominant tribe makes *iltiḥām* or builds a coalition with the leading tribes. Thus, the ruling tribe establishes its authority by forming the social integration of different tribes around its own ideology. Ibn Khaldūn asserts that "A dynasty rarely establishes itself firmly in lands with many different tribes and groups. This is because of differences in opinions and desires. Behind each opinion and desire there is group feeling defending it."⁶⁹⁵ Therefore, the ruling tribe must possess a strong position to unify the conflicting tribes and convince them to extend their loyalty to the ruling elites. In the absence of such tribal authority, the religious authorities play a significant role and they initiate their movement on the basis of religion to unify the hostile interest groups.

In this context, it can be observed that the Umayyads established authority over the other tribes of Quraysh. The pre-Islamic supremacy of the Umayyads also helped them to consolidate their

⁶⁹⁴ Hague, Harrop and Breslin, *Comparative Government and Politics, an introduction*, (Macmillan, 1992), 147.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, trans: Franz Rosenthal, (Princeton NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1967), 130.

hegemony over the Hāshimids. Both Mu^ʿāwīya and ^ʿAbd al-Malik played a significant role in securing authority. Once they had established authority, they focused on creating harmony among different hostile tribes. They also attracted the religious scholars, as has been discussed in previous chapters, to consolidate their religious authority as well; thus they mobilized both elements of tribal society to convince the masses to extend their consent to the Umayyads. Both the Yemen and Muḍar extended their socio-political allegiance to the Umayyads until the period of Hishām b. ^ʿAbd al-Malik. Looking at the early Umayyad period reveals that they used coercive and oppressive measures to suppress the rebellions and revolts against them, but at the same time they constructed a dominant culture with the assistance of the intellectual and religious leadership. With these measures, they not only maintained their authority but also created a space and culture where the subordinate or dominated class extended its consent to accept their hegemony without any significant opposition. However, the later Umayyads, because of their internal conflict, lost the support of civil society. Consequently, they did not have any alternative except to exercise coercive measures to stabilise the state.

All the later Umayyads after the death of Hishām b. ^ʿAbd al-Malik, used coercive means to establish the right of the government. Al-Walīd b. Yazīd significantly fractured the balance of tribal politics. The Muḍar gained more power in his period; whereas, the Yemen came to power during al-Walīd's period. The Muḍar supported Marwān b. Muḥammad in reaction. The competing tribal groups of Yemen and Muḍar served the Umayyads but when the later Umayyads could not maintain the balance of power, they began to work for their own interests. The Yemen tribes of Syria lost their authority when Marwān b. Muḥammad came into power with the help of his Muḍarī army of al-Jazīra. Despite having great leadership abilities Marwān b. Muḥammad had to utilize coercive measures to consolidate his power but he failed because he could not convince the masses. Moreover, the divided and weak tribal society could not legitimise his authority.

In evaluating the early sources on the issue of ^ʿaṣabīya and its role in the fall of the Umayyad, it is assumed that the later Umayyads could not maintain their ^ʿaṣabīya. Therefore, it is observed that a conflict emerged within the members of the Umayyad family. Similarly, on a national level, the Arabs could not preserve their ^ʿaṣabīya and conflict broke out among the Arab tribes. Consequently, the Arab Umayyad kingdom was replaced by the ^ʿAbbasids who were mainly

supported by non-Arabs of Khurasan. The conflict within the Umayyad royal family provoked Yemen and Muḍar tribal conflict. The pre-Modern historians examined Hishām's unfriendly relations with his would-be successor al-Walīd b. Yazīd. Therefore when al-Walīd came to power, he dismissed all Hishām's governors and deputies and punished them mercilessly with the exception of the governor of Iraq, Yūsuf b. ʿUmar. As a result, the tribal conflict influenced all socio-political and religious spheres of life. The ʿAbbāsīd movement took advantage of the internal conflict and came into power with the assistance of their Khurāsānīan fellows. Moreover, the ʿAbbāsīds utilised a religious spirit to achieve their political target. In this context, Ibn Khaldūn's ʿaṣabīya theory seems logical. The Umayyads lost their control when the conflict emerged among members of the royal family. Further, the Umayyads could not understand the pace of socio-political change. They consistently based their power on Arab culture which was in fact a culture of ruling through Arab tribalism, whereas the ʿAbbāsīds devised an alternative ideology and founded their rule on Arab-Persian culture. They actually came into power with the help of non-Arabs. Thus, they had to share authority with their non-Arab supporters. Therefore, in contrast to the Umayyads, the ʿAbbāsīds could not enjoy absolute authority.

The anti-Umayyad forces remained unsuccessful against the Umayyads' authority. However, when conflict appeared among the Umayyad family members, they began to lose the support of the tribes. The allegiance of tribes was divided among the leading members of the Umayyad family. Thus, in Gramscian terminology, 'a war of movement' broke out for the survival of the state. This can be observed in the episode of Yazīd b. al-Walīd and Marwān b. Muḥammad. Moreover, when the ʿAbbāsīds observed the weak and fragile tribes that lacked the leadership of any strong hegemon, they started a 'war of manoeuvre' against the Umayyads on religious grounds. As noted above, Ibn Khaldūn argues that in the absence of tribal unity, religion can play a role in social cohesion. Here we can see that the ʿAbbāsīd presented an alternative ideology based on religious rhetoric. Marwān b. Muḥammad's governor of Khurāsān attempted to pacify the people of Khurāsān by introducing the economic reforms. It was an unsuccessful attempt at 'a war

of position' or passive revolution.⁶⁹⁶ Earlier, ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz had attempted to revitalize the state through 'a war of position' but he also failed due to his brief period of rule, and opposition within the Umayyad royal family. As a result, it can be concluded that the Umayyads lost 'a war of position' in the episode involving ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz and Naṣr b. Sayyār. Further, they also lost 'the war of movement' and the 'war of manoeuvre' after the death of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik. It was their failure to win the consent of tribal and religious authorities that led them to their decline.

⁶⁹⁶ The 'war of position' or passive revolution means an attempt to control possible opposition through devising reforms without changing the existing structure of authority. It is basically an endeavour to renew the hegemony of the ruling elites – a kind of revolution from above. Gramsci, *A Selections from the Prison Notebook*, 446-481.

7 Chapter Seven: Conclusion

Historically, the fall of the Umayyads was an event of great importance and has had a lasting impact on the subsequent socio-political, ethnic, and religious spheres of Muslim history and culture. In this thesis, we have attempted to identify the factors that contributed to the Umayyad decline. In an attempt to understand and interpret this complex phenomenon, modern scholars have devised several approaches. Reporting of events in pre-Modern historiographies is in many ways vague, conflicting, and quite ambiguous, since the historiographers usually revealed many contradictory reports without analysing them properly. The issue of presentation became more complicated since most of the sources composed during the °Abbāsid period are found to have been under the direct or indirect influence of an anti-Umayyad ruler. Thus, the possibility of hostile sources is evident. This study has analysed the pre-modern sources identifying their aims and objectives in the depiction of the later Umayyad period. The pre-Modern sources contain a variety of reports that consist of divergent themes involved in the decline of the Umayyads. The absence of analysis of events in pre-Modern historiographies gives modern scholars an opportunity to explain and interpret such events according to their own understanding. Consequently, modern historiographers have applied multiple methods to understand and interpret the fall of the Umayyads, and have used the pre-Modern chronicles to prove their argument. This research has attempted to analyse both pre-modern and modern historiographies to determine their perceptions and approaches regarding the Umayyad fall, focusing entirely on the events of the last eight years of Umayyad rule.

The intention was to determine the aims and objectives of traditional or pre-Modern historiographers in describing the fall of the Umayyads and to establish the nature of the Modern approaches to understanding the causes of that fall. In addition, Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony was applied as a way of analysing events through a particular perspective, an approach that has provided a unique framework for the study of Umayyad history. Moreover, the application of Gramscian theory has enabled the exploration of new dimensions in assessing Umayyad historiography, thereby increasing understanding of the existing state of knowledge. In order to evaluate the subject matter holistically, the work was divided into chapters. The two introductory chapters defined the subject matter and reviewed important pre-modern and modern

historiographies of the Umayyad period. By determining a potential hypothesis and research questions for the study, the limitations of the research were established.

For a better understanding of the subject, the histories of five pre-modern historiographers were selected: i.e., al-Ya^ʿqūbī (d. 284/897), al-Ṭabarī (d. 301/922), al-Mas^ʿūdī (d. 346/957), Ibn Athīr (d. 630/1232) and Ibn Khaldūn. These historians, with the exception of Ibn Khaldūn, present extensive information about the Umayyads' fall but without properly analysing and identifying the real causes of their decline. Therefore, the early historiographies have no clear interpretation of the fall of the Umayyads. An attempt was made to ascertain the aims and objectives of these historiographers by analysing their writing style and their way of presentation, and by examining what they have expressed between the lines. A brief detail of these pre-Modern sources follows:

1. Al-Ya^ʿqūbī's presentation of Umayyad history is considered biased because of his adherence to the Ahl al-Bayt (the family of the Prophet). He preferred their verdict and therefore accepted all the reports that came from that source. He criticised the Umayyads and was particularly with regard to al-Walīd b. Yazīd.⁶⁹⁷ He did not consider the rule of the Umayyads to be legitimate and therefore used the word *ayyām* instead of *dawah* or *khilāfa* for their rule.⁶⁹⁸ On the basis of al-Ya^ʿqūbī's presentation, it can be concluded that the fall of the Umayyads was a natural process. They declined because they did not have the legitimacy to rule and they deserved such a fall.

2. Al-Ṭabarī has long been established as the most important historiographer of early Islamic history and has had a tremendous impact on subsequent historiography. His presentation of historical accounts is usually considered comparatively authentic and balanced; as Duri asserts, al-Ṭabarī is unbiased and impartial in his presentation of his sources. This does not mean that he had no agenda. In constructing Muslim historiography he endeavoured to illustrate the oneness of the prophetic mission and continuity of the umma, presenting history as the "expression of divine will".⁶⁹⁹ Khalidi admits that al-Ṭabarī was involved in theological disputes with the Qadarites of his own time, but denies that his presentation of history reflected his views on such matters,⁷⁰⁰

⁶⁹⁷ Al-Ya^ʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 303-320/2.

⁶⁹⁸ *ibid.*, 333/2.

⁶⁹⁹ Duri, A.H. *The Rise of Historical Writings*, 70.

⁷⁰⁰ Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 80.

while Franz Rosenthal also suggests that al-Ṭabarī's bias is reflected in his omission of certain anti-ʿAbbāsīd materials.⁷⁰¹ As far as the late Umayyads are concerned, al-Ṭabarī is not authentic in his presentation. Reflecting his regional bias and partiality, he relied almost exclusively on Iraqī sources for his description of the Umayyad period, and depicted Damascus, the Umayyad capital, and Syria, the Umayyads' centre of power, on the basis of Iraqī reporters who had not personally witnessed the events. In criticising al-Ṭabarī, Donner argues that about eighty percent of his narratives regarding Syria are derived from Iraqī sources, and claims that al-Ṭabarī ignored the Syrian sources that were accessible to him.⁷⁰² Similarly, Judd says that "the history of Umayyad Syria is presented almost exclusively through Iraqī sources. While these sources may not have been overtly hostile to the Umayyad regime, they do offer a rather limited perspective."⁷⁰³

Regardless of all these deficiencies, al-Ṭabarī had a tremendous impact on the later as well as the more modern works on the late Umayyads. He compiled a detailed elaboration of the Umayyad period, applying the methodologies of both historians and traditionalists. Like other historians, however, he did not interpret the historical events that accompanied the fall of the Umayyads, but narrated events without expressing his own opinion. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain al-Ṭabarī's own standpoint regarding the fall of the Umayyads, although we can assume his opinion by examining his method of presentation. Possibly the points to which more space was given in al-Ṭabarī's work are more important according to his understanding. He certainly devoted more space to the internal conflicts of the Umayyads, describing events during the last years of Umayyad rule and enlarging greatly on the internal conflicts among the Umayyad family. He narrated the events of the year 126/743, calling them the events that upset the rule of the Marwānids,⁷⁰⁴ and reported in detail how al-Walīd b. Yazīd was criticized by Yazīd b. al-Walīd. When the internal conflict in the house of Umayyad reached its height, the ʿAbbāsīds took advantage of this disruption.

⁷⁰¹ Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 135.

⁷⁰² Donner, Fred "The Problem of Early Arabic Historiography in Syria", *Proceedings of the Second Symposium on the History of Bilād al-Shām During the early Islamic Period up to 40AH/640 AD.* Ed. M.A. Bakhit, (Amman: University of Jordan, 1987), 1-2, 20-23.

⁷⁰³ Judd, *The Third Fitna*, 58.

⁷⁰⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 262/7.

3. Al-Masʿūdī was also criticized because of his inclination towards Shiʿism. He disapproved of the Umayyads because of their immorality, and asserted that Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik was very tight-fisted. His criticism of al-Walīd b. Yazīd was harsh; in his work he devoted much space to criticising his morals, religion and conduct, and declared that he was a heretic, an atheist and a characterless person.⁷⁰⁵ Moreover, al-Masʿūdī did not consider Umayyad rule to have Islamic legitimacy. Therefore, like al-Yaʿqūbī, he use the word al-ayyām for the rule of the Umayyads, whereas he used the word al-khilāfah for the rule of the Abbasids, which indicates that the Umayyads, according to him, had neither the legitimacy nor the ability to rule. Therefore, their rule disintegrated.⁷⁰⁶

4. Ibn Athīr took a clear stand on the Umayyads in his historiography. He also revealed prophetic traditions in order to validate his point of view. His historiography is considered the best defence of the Umayyads. He praised al-Walīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik for his achievements, conquests, and construction of mosques, and for extending Umayyad rule from Andalusia to Kashghar and the Indian sub-continent. He also refused to accept reports about al-Walīd b. Yazīd's immoral behaviour.⁷⁰⁷ Ibn Athīr believes that the Umayyads behaved badly but most of their misdeeds were attributed to them by their enemies, particularly the Shiʿis and the Khawārij who accused them of wrongdoings that they had not committed. The decline of the Umayyads was basically because of the internal conflict within the house of Umayyad after the death of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik. There is considerable similarity between the views of al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Athīr, perhaps because both were Sunnis.⁷⁰⁸

5. The history of Ibn Khaldūn is an exception in the pre-Modern sources. Ibn Khaldūn was less hostile towards the Umayyads and even admired al-Walīd b. Yazīd, rejecting most of the

⁷⁰⁵ Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, 3/2. Note that Ibn Khaldūn rejected reports of this kind, arguing that al-Walīd b. Yazīd was criticised by his cousins because of jealousy caused by his conflict with them (Ibn Khaldun, 132/3).

⁷⁰⁶ Al-Masʿūdī, *al-Tanbih wa-al-Ashraf*, 277.

⁷⁰⁷ Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 42, 280-281/5.

⁷⁰⁸ This view is also endorsed by eminent Sunnī scholars such as Ibn Hazm al-Andalusī (d. 456/1063) and Abū Bakr Ibn ʿArabī (d. 543/1148). Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymīyah (d. 728/1327) later wrote a book, *Minhāj al-Sunnah al-Nabawīyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyah, n.d.) confirming the findings of these scholars. Cf. ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm ʿAways: *Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī wa-Juhdahū fī al-Baḥṭh al-Tārīkhī wa-al-Ḥaḍārī*, 260; Abū Bakr Ibn ʿArabī, *al-ʿAwāsim min al-Qawāsim fī Taḥqīq Mawāqif al-Ṣaḥābah Baʿd Wafāt al-Nabī*.

accusations made against him. He reported that, in the opinion of the ʿAbbāsīd caliph al-Mahdī, the negative depiction of al-Walīd b. Yazīd was because leading members of his family came into conflict with him out of jealousy.⁷⁰⁹ Ibn Khaldūn, who is considered to be the founder of the philosophy of history, analysed the decline of the Umayyads from a philosophical angle, arguing that a kingdom is always based on two foundations: ʿaṣabīya which provides a strong armed force, and money which is required to regulate the kingdom's institutions. The Umayyads possessed both of these elements, possessing greater financial resources and stronger tribal ʿaṣabīya since they belonged to the Banū ʿAbd Munāf, whose tribal eminence was established among all Arab tribes.⁷¹⁰ The ʿaṣabīya gradually became weak among the Umayyads and consequently their tribal unity was fractured and they could not maintain their rule.⁷¹¹ In addition to ʿaṣabīya, Ibn Khaldūn identifies other elements, such as internal family conflict, mismanagement, and the rise of the ʿAbbāsīds, as significant factors in the disintegration of the Umayyad rule. Ibn Khaldūn's theoretical framework for the interpretation of Umayyad history was widely received by the modern historiographers of the Umayyad period.

Assessment of the pre-Modern sources suggests that the pre-modern historians, with the exception of Ibn Khaldūn, did not identify any particular cause for the decline of the Umayyads but merely reported all the events that led to the end of Umayyad rule. Moreover, their reporting of the Umayyads seems hostile and biased as their accounts were written under ʿAbbāsīd influence based on Iraqi traditions. However, in contrast to the historical sources, the literary sources are more hostile to the Umayyads. Modern anti-Umayyad scholars base their arguments more on the literary than the historical sources, and the availability of a varied collection of historical literature gives modern scholars an opportunity to interpret Umayyad history according to their own understanding. Most of the pre-Modern historiographies provide information without making any analysis or interpretation; however, most are hostile towards the Umayyads. Secondly, they mostly focused on the role of Khurāsān in the fall of Umayyads. In contrast to the pre-Modern

⁷⁰⁹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh*, 132/3.

⁷¹⁰ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqdimā*, 132/2.

⁷¹¹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqdimā*, 763/2.

historiographers, the modern scholars evaluate the phenomenon of the decline by applying different theories.

It is well-known that historians are products of their own time. They evaluate history under the influence of their intellectual environments and then explain it through the lenses of their contemporary dominant paradigms in order to comprehend the past through present-day idioms. Modern scholars attempt to reconstruct history by reformulating various methods. During the last two centuries, many orientalists have endeavoured to examine the Umayyad period through the application of specific theories, aiming to evaluate the rise and fall of the Umayyads in order to construct a viable illustration of Umayyad rule. Most of these historiographers analysed the historical data with some prior suppositions and hypotheses. In the context of the conflicts of the emerging and established powers and the debate about nationalism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Umayyad rule was also examined through the lens of nationalistic interpretations as a manifestation of conflict between Arabs and Persians. After the Socialist revolution in Russia,⁷¹² the socialist orientalists interpreted the historical events of Umayyad rule in economic terms, seeing the internal and external conflicts in the first and second centuries of Islam as a class struggle. Although the history of the Umayyads has been less prominent in the post-Second World War period, the problem of Israel and Palestine, as Hawting argued, “has fostered an interest in Umayyad policies in the region and especially in the importance of Jerusalem of the Umayyads.”⁷¹³ Thus, it can be seen that the modern scholars focus on identifying the real cause of the decline, whereas the pre-Modern historiographies are mostly based on narration, leaving the reader room to interpret events according to his own ability to understand.

Modern scholars of the Umayyad period, who have devised various approaches and methodologies for analysis and interpretation of the primary sources, can be divided into two distinctive groups: traditionalists and revisionists. Among the traditionalists, who devised a method of critical analysis for the study of pre-Modern sources, Wellhausen holds a central position. In contrast to the classical anti-Umayyad position, he admires the Umayyads’ administrative system, deriving most

⁷¹² For instance, the Russian scholar, E. A. Belyaev applied the Marxist approach to class and social relationships in order to evaluate the history of Islam in his book *Arabs, Islam and the Arab Caliphate in the Early Middle Ages*.

⁷¹³ Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, 127.

of the material for his book from al-Ṭabarī's work, and also asserts that the role of the Persian mawālī of Khurāsān was central in the Umayyad fall, arguing that Abū Muslim's army consisted basically of Iranian peasants and the mawālī of the village of Marv. He also affirms that the role of Arab settlers was also significant in the revolutionary army.⁷¹⁴ It can be said that Wellhausen is a beacon of modern scholarship since all the traditionalists follow his footsteps in one way or other although they also criticise many of his assertions.

The real criticism, however, came from the revisionists. For example, Dennett challenged Wellhausen's views on financial policies, while Shaban reassessed the role of the mawālī of Khurāsān and maintained that Abū Muslim's main support came from the Arab quarters in Marv.⁷¹⁵ Furthermore, the tribal conflict of Yemen and Qays was not merely a tribally-based conflict – rather it was conflict of agendas between two political parties. The Yemen was in favour of assimilation, while the Qays stood for the expansionist policy. The failure of Marwān II's expansionist policy led to the end of his rule. The resentment of the mawālīs and the discontent of the Arab settlers over the war policy of the later Umayyads provoked the Khurāsānians to revolt. Shaban argues that the economic interests of the Arab immigrants were also incompatible with the expansionist policy of the later Umayyads. Thus, socio-economic interests made the opponents of the rule more receptive to the Khurasanians.

The Hāshimid-^cAbbāsīd movement was principally initiated on the issue of the assimilation of all members of the Muslim community under an equal system, and Marwānīd rule was successfully overthrown on the basis of this idea. It is interesting that Shaban, compared with Wellhausen focus on Yemen-Qays rivalries, gives more importance to the socio-economic elements that played a decisive role in the fall of the Umayyads.⁷¹⁶ Furthermore, Patricia Crone in her critique of Shaban's work also challenged the secular image of the Umayyads and provided extensive textual evidence for their religiosity. A number of studies have been conducted by revisionists in an attempt to identify the real causes of the Umayyads' decline, all of which revolve around three major themes:

⁷¹⁴Wellhausen, *Arab Kingdom*, 532.

⁷¹⁵ Shaban, *The Abbasid Revolution*, 156.

⁷¹⁶Shaban, *Islamic History*, 161.

the role of religion and religious movements, the role of non-Arabs, and ʿaṣabīya. In an attempt to hear the echo of the Umayyads' decline, pre-modern and modern sources have been analysed, and a variety of modern approaches and methodologies applied to the study of the Umayyads has been explored and analysed. Furthermore, Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony, as mentioned above, has been employed to explain and interpret the causes of the Umayyads' fall.

The third chapter of this thesis presented a general historical background to the Umayyads. On the basis of pre-modern historical sources, it was found that the Umayyads established their authority because of their greater pre-Islamic tribal and financial supremacy. Muʿāwīya successfully founded the Umayyad rule after the assassination of ʿAlī with the help of the Syrian army. His son Yazīd had to face strong opposition that became stronger after his death and the authority of the Umayyads was challenged. At this stage, the ruling power shifted from the Sufyānid to the Marwānid branch of the Umayyads. The historical sources record that ʿAbd al-Malik controlled all oppositional forces of the Zubayrid, the Khawārij and the Shiʿīs, and selected pre-modern and modern historiographies were analysed to identify the factor that contributed to overall socio-political and religious development. In addition, Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony was applied to the study of a historical perspective on the Umayyads. Gramsci declares that text cannot be understood without properly understanding the context. Thus it is of great importance to understand pre-Islamic tribal formation and Umayyad-Hāshimid hostility in studying the Umayyad era.

On the basis of their pre-Islamic pre-eminence, the Umayyads consolidated their authority when Muʿāwīya came to power. He constructed a plausible image among the masses by establishing a decentralised governmental structure and reforming administrative and economic systems. In Gramscian terms, he succeeded in presenting an acceptable structure (economic base) and superstructure (the ideology of the ruling class). Consequently, an 'organic relationship' emerged between the economic base and cultural ideas, and a 'historic bloc' came into existence, through which the Umayyads consolidated their hegemony over the masses. The Marwānid carried on the legacy of the Sufyānid. Having eliminated the main strength of the oppositional forces, they attached both religious and secular socio-political intellectuals to their court who presented a convincing image to the masses. Thus, the common people consented to accepting their hegemony,

while the shattered opposition was pacified either through agreements being reached or with the use of coercive means. It is concluded that the Umayyads devised a suitable strategy which was appropriately implemented with the assistance of the Syrian army who were represented as the vanguard of the Umayyads. This contextual study enabled an understanding and identification of the real factors involved in the Umayyads' fall.

The fourth chapter analysed the role of religion and religious movements in the fall of the Umayyads as manifested in five pre-Modern and modern historiographies. The religious movements analysed were the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd, the Khawārij and the Qadārīya, all of which opposed the ruling Umayyads. It was found that these religious movements were linked to other socio-political and tribal identities, and after examining various approaches to the role of religious movements, the Gramscian theory of hegemony was applied for the study of the religious movements of the later Umayyad period. The viability of the ideology, organisation, and strategy of these oppositional religious movements as a counter-hegemonic force was examined, and the thesis confirmed that the ʿAbbāsīd movement remained successful because of its superior ideology, strategy, and organisational structure whereas the Khawārij and Qadārīya lacked the necessary elements required for a counter-hegemonic force.

It has also been argued that although the Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd ideology was neither new nor innovative, the socio-political environment of that precise moment gave it the potential to challenge the authority of the Umayyads. The secret Hāshimid-ʿAbbāsīd movement of Iraqī and Khurāsānī intellectuals and propagandists convinced the oppressed to favour revolution. Moreover, Abū Muslim Khurāsānī devised a viable strategy to weaken the strength of the ruling party and then successfully organized a vanguard party in Iraq and Khurāsān to establish ʿAbbāsīd rule by force. Thus, it was practicable to combine the strategic and organizational abilities of the ʿAbbāsīds to act as a counter-hegemonic force.

The role of the non-Arab mawālī in the development and demise of the Umayyads was evaluated in the fifth chapter. With the expansion of Muslim rule, a multi-cultural society came into being. Some Modern scholars assert that Umayyad rule was typified by Arab hegemony over the subject peoples and their socio-economic policies resulted in the triumph of feudal relations among the Arabs and mawālī. The Arabs were a privileged class enjoying high social status whereas the

mawālī were a deprived class struggling for equal rights. It was observed that the narratives of historical sources are at variance with the accounts of literary Arabic sources. An anti-mawālī voice was heard in Arabic literature, whereas the historical sources revealed the active participation of the mawālī in different socio-political and religious movements. Therefore, historical chronicles and Arabic literature were both used for analysis of the mawālī.

It was found that the mawālīs' participation in Ibn Ash'ath's movement is exaggerated in modern sources such as Von Kremer, Mullur and van Volten. However, Wellhausen, Shaban and Hawting assert that the central role in Ibn Ash'ath's movement was played by the Yemen tribes while the role of mawālī was secondary. We maintain that Kremer's interpretation is based on the account of Jāhiz's *al-ʿIqd al-Farīd* which is a literary work. On the other hand the pre-modern historians such as al-Ṭabarī report that Ibn Ash'ath's rebellion was due to his conflict with al-Ḥajjāj and that his army consisted of thousands of Arabs and non-Arabs. Kremer's thesis is actually based on Shu'ūbī literature, in which the mawālīs have been depicted as a subordinate class. This chapter also evaluated the significance of the Shu'ūbiya as basically a reaction of non-Arabs against the Arab aristocracy. Perhaps overly influenced by Arabic literary sources, some modern scholars have depicted the mawālī as a marginalized class in the Umayyad era.

The role of mawālī in the ʿAbbāsīd revolution is also evaluated through the analysis of modern and pre-modern sources. Modern scholarship on the mawālīs' role is again divided between two groups: the traditionalists and revisionists. Traditionalists emphasise the mawālīs' role in the fall of the Umayyads, whereas the revisionists argue that the mawālī played a secondary role under the Arabs. Notable among the traditionalist-leaning scholars are Kremer, van Vloten, Goldziher and Wellhausen, while the revisionist school of thought includes Dennett, Gibb, Shaban, Zakeri, Crone, and Agha. A comparative study of modern scholarship concludes that the traditionalist modern sources over-emphasised the mawālīs' role in the oppositional forces of the Umayyad era, while the decisive part in the revolution was played by former Arab warriors residing in the region of Khurāsān. Research suggests that the mawālīs' role in the downfall of the Umayyads was subsidiary and that most of the reports revealed in Arabic literary sources are fabricated.

Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony was applied to evaluate the role of mawālī in the rise and fall of the Umayyads and how the Umayyads, being a dominant class, maintained their authority

through coercive measures and through presenting values acceptable to the mawālī. It has been noted that the Arabic literary sources are biased in the way they paint a negative image of the Umayyads. There were many well-known members of the mawālī who played the role of ‘deputies’ of the ruling class, according to a Gramscian view; however, the ideology of the oppositional movements attracted the mawālī. Assessment of pre-modern and modern sources on the mawālī’s role made it possible to locate the mawālīs within a subordinate class, and from a Gramscian perspective, to observe how class consciousness developed among them. The role of mawālī in the Ibn Ash‘ath movement shows their contradictory position. They assisted an Arab against an Arab without realising that neither had any agenda to strengthen or elevate the mawālīs’ position. Thus, the mawālī struggle was ‘disjointed and episodic’ because they had no consistent class consciousness or coherent identity. Therefore, Umayyad and anti-Umayyad forces both utilised the strength of the mawālī for their own ends. It was also found that ‘Umar b. ‘Abd ‘Azīz’s reforms to elevate the status of the mawālī represented an attempt to stage passive revolution in Gramscian terms. Similar reforms were introduced by Ashras and Naṣr b. Sayyār in his final days. The Shu‘ūbīya too were evaluated with reference to Gramsci’s concept of folklore. Shu‘ūbī literature is a pre-eminent example of ‘spontaneous philosophy’ and ‘folklore’ in Gramsci’s understanding. Although it has been confirmed that most of the reports of Shu‘ūbī literature are fabricated, these narrations, even then, played a significant role in the construction of ethnic identity and class consciousness. In addition, the ideology of anti-Umayyad oppositional forces claimed equal rights, which also created class consciousness among mawālī and in particular among the mawālī of Khurāsān where they were in close relationship with Arab settlers. This research concludes that class consciousness emerged among the mawālī of Khurāsān but they were not strong enough to fight for their rights individually. They therefore supported the ‘Abbāsīd ideology which gave them equal rights, and worked under the strong counter-hegemonic force of the ‘Abbāsīds.

‘Aṣabīya or the notion of tribalism is a highly celebrated phenomenon and has received great attention in both the modern and pre-modern historiographies. It is often argued that the Umayyads lost their authority when weakness appeared in their ‘aṣabīya, since the conflict among members of the Umayyad family produced conflict between the Yamanīs and Qaysīs. The conflict between

the Hāshimids and Umayyads had its roots in the pre-Islamic period, at which stage, the ʿAbbāsids took advantage of the Umayyad family conflicts and Arab tribal conflicts, and with the support of the non-Arab people of Khurāsān shattered the strength of the ruling party. The pre-modern sources devoted substantial space to the study of this theme. In contrast to other pre-modern historians, Ibn Khaldūn focused largely on the role of tribalism in the Umayyad fall. ʿAṣabīya was examined by illustrating three competing ʿaṣabīya themes: (i) the internal conflict within the Umayyad family; (ii) Yemenīs/Kalbīs versus Muḍarīs/Qaysīs; and (iii) the Hāshimids-ʿAbbasids versus the Umayyads. Ibn Khaldūn’s theory of ʿaṣabīya was defined and applied to five selected pre-modern histories to see how they interpreted the fall of the Umayyads in the light of this theory.

The second part of the chapter evaluates the modern interpretation of ʿaṣabīya’s role in the Umayyad fall. The role of tribalism in the fall of the Umayyads was examined in the light of Gramsci’s theory of cultural hegemony, and Ibn Khaldūn’s theory of ʿaṣabīya, constructed for the study of tribal society, was compared with Gramsci’s theory of cultural hegemony and its focus on civil society. Ibn Khaldūn holds that a fragile tribal leadership provides space for religious leadership. Therefore, the ʿAbbāsids came into power on the basis of religion and ideology when the Umayyads had lost their tribal strength. On the other hand, there have been attempts to analyse the role of ʿaṣabīya through the application of Gramsci’s concepts of ‘war of movement’ and ‘war of manoeuvre’. The Umayyads had actually lost both their religious and their tribal authority by the end of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik’s rule. Our research confirms that conflict among the members of the Umayyad family shattered their tribal unity, which ultimately broke Arab tribal unity as well. In this context, the ʿAbbāsids came forward with a better ideology, strategy and organisation by making alliances with non-Arabs.

Appendix I

Marwān b. Muḥammad- the Last Umayyad Caliph

A careful study of Marwān's role is necessary in order to understand the Umayyads' collapse since he was the last Umayyad ruler. He had been appointed to key posts during the reign of Hishām and later caliphs. Hishām had assigned him the governorship of Armenia and Azerbaijan.⁷¹⁷ Al-Walīd took radical actions against Hishām's administration. He dismissed almost all the governors except the governor of Iraq, Yūsuf b. ʿUmar al-Thaqafī.⁷¹⁸ Marwān observed the situation and accepted the authority of al-Walīd.⁷¹⁹ He sent him a long letter full of praise for the new caliph.⁷²⁰ Thus, he successfully achieved his political ambitions. He not only secured his governorship of Armenia and Azerbaijan but also assigned the governorship of al-Jazīra. On the other hand, al-Walīd confirmed the governorship of Marwān because he wanted to win his support for nominating his sons, al-Ḥakam, and ʿUthmān for the succession.⁷²¹ Al-Walīd had already annoyed the traditional authorities in Damascus. Al-Ṭabarī notes that al-Walīd made two great mistakes. He annoyed his family and secondly, he favoured the Qays and disregarded the Yemen that was the leading party of the Syrians.⁷²² From this perspective, Yazīd b. al-Walīd started a rebellion with the assistance of aggrieved parties against al-Walīd that ended up with the assassination of al-Walīd.

Marwān, the governor of a predominantly Qaysī region, was against Yazīd b. al-Walīd's rebellion. He protested against the assassination of al-Walīd b. Yazīd and started a movement against Yazīd b. al-Walīd, but later took the oath of allegiance. Consequently, Damascus confirmed his

⁷¹⁷ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 425/5; however, according to the report of Ibn Athīr, He was also governor of al-Jazīra during Hishām's rule. (*al-Kāmil*, 215/4). Ibn Athīr's report does not appear to be correct as Marwān was appointed the governor of al-Jazīra during the reign of Yazīd b. al-Walīd while ʿAbdah b. al-Riyyāḥ was governor of al-Jazīra during al-Walīd's rule. Then ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān b. Muhammad attacked al-Jazīra and destroyed its marginal faction while Marwān was in Armenia. (*al-Kāmil*, 215/4) There is no evidence that tells us when and why Marwān was dismissed from the governorship of al-Jazīra.

⁷¹⁸ al-Yaʿqābi, *Tārīkh*, 331/2.

⁷¹⁹ Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 258/4.

⁷²⁰ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 226/4.

⁷²¹ *ibid.*, 227/4.

⁷²² *ibid.*, 235/4.

governorship of Armenia, Aljazeera, Mosul and Azerbaijan.⁷²³ There are different reports about the causes of his revolt. He rejected the legitimacy of Yazīd b. al-Walīd and rebelled against him and upon his arrival at Harrān, he asked people to give the oath of allegiance to him and the people of Jazīra gave their allegiance secretly.⁷²⁴ On the other hand, Ibn ʿAsākir reported that Marwān called the people to take the oath of allegiance to the person about whom the Muslim community had developed a consensus.⁷²⁵ However, in another report, Ibn ʿAsākir revealed that Marwān asked the people of Homs to take the oath of allegiance to al-Ḥakam and ʿUthmān, sons of al-Walīd.⁷²⁶ Ibn Athīr reported that Marwān revolted after the death of Yazīd in Jazīra and asked the people of Qinisreen to take the oath. The people of Homs also took the oath of allegiance to him and accompanied him in his revolutionary movement.⁷²⁷ All these reports show that Marwān was not satisfied with the aggressive act of Yazīd but he did not know to how to resolve the issue amicably with minimum damage.

Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih tells us that Yazīd b. al-Walīd wrote a letter to Marwān b. Muḥammad and asked him to clarify his position as to whether he accepted the authority of central government of Syria or not, since there were contradictory reports regarding Marwān's position. Yazīd also decided to stop sending delegations to Marwān without discontinuing financial assistance to him until there was clarification of Marwān's position. When Marwān came to know Yazīd's suspicion, he sent a delegation to clarify his position. On the way, when the delegation arrived at Furāt, they received the news regarding the death of Yazīd b. al-Walīd. Thus, they returned to Marwān.⁷²⁸ All these reports validate the fact that Marwān was cautious. He continuously asserted his efforts to put pressure on the emerging caliphs. He successfully manoeuvred the situation and saved his governorship and authority under Hishām, al-Walīd, and Yazīd b. al-Walīd.

After the death of Yazīd, it was time for Marwān to challenge the authority of a weak caliph Ibrāhīm b. al-Walīd, the brother of the late Yazīd b. al-Walīd. He started a rebellion defying

⁷²³ *ibid.*, 272/4.

⁷²⁴ al-Yaʿqubī, *Tārīkh*, 337/2.

⁷²⁵ Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tahdhīb*, 193/16.

⁷²⁶ *ibid.*, 193/16.

⁷²⁷ Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 283-284/4.

⁷²⁸ Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *al-ʿIqd al-Farīd*, 464-465/4.

Ibrāhīm's legitimacy in the name of al-Walīd II and his sons. He called the people of al-Jazīra, Mosel and Azerbaijan to take revenge for the murdered caliph al-Walīd b. Yazīd, and to release both of al-Walīd II's sons, al-Ḥakam and ʿUthmān. He moved his armies from al-Jazīra to Damascus. On the way he took an oath of allegiance from the people of Qinisreen and Homs.⁷²⁹ Marwān II argued that al-Walīd b. Yazīd was an aggrieved caliph (*khalifa al-maẓlūm*). He further asserted that his position was comparable with Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān when he demanded that the murderers of ʿUthmān be given a fair trial.⁷³⁰

Ibrāhīm and his fellows realised the danger. They organised an army of 21,000 under the leadership of Sulaymān b. Hishām. Ibrāhīm's army marched towards the ʿAyn al-Jarr where they met with Marwān's army. The army consisted of almost 80,000 thousand soldiers and the battle took place on 7th of Ṣafar, 127 AH. The battle ended with the defeat of Sulaymān b. Hishām.⁷³¹ About 17 thousand soldiers of the Syrian army were killed while Sulaymān b. Hishām fled from the battlefield to Damascus. The prisoners of the battle were released on condition they took the oath of allegiance to the two sons of al-Walīd.⁷³²

Ibrāhīm and his administration realised that their rule was now over. They had foreseen that al-Ḥakam, son of al-Walīd b. Yazīd, would become the caliph upon the arrival of Marwān in Damascus and that al-Ḥakam might take fierce revenge for his father. Therefore, they killed al-Ḥakam, his brother and Yūsuf b. ʿUmar al-Thaqfī in prison.⁷³³ Luckily, Abū Muḥammad al-Sufyānī, one of the distinguished adherents of al-Walīd from the Umayyad family, escaped from prison. Upon the arrival of Marwān, he recited a qaṣīda and claimed that it was composed by al-Ḥakam. The qaṣīda was full of praise for Marwān; and it also suggested Marwān's succession, in case al-Ḥakam or his brother ʿUthmān were murdered; the last verse of the qaṣīda reads:

⁷²⁹ al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 337/2; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 274/4; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 282/4; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *al-ʿIqd al-Farīd*, 466-467/4.

⁷³⁰ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 187/5.

⁷³¹ al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 337/2; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 274-275/4; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 283/4.

⁷³² al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 275/4; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 283/4. Note: According to al-Ṭabarī's report, only two of the prisoners were killed: Yazīd b. al-ʿIqār and al-Walīd b. Maṣād of Kalb because they had killed al-Walīd b. Yazīd. (al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 275/4).

⁷³³ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 275/4; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 283/4

If my successor and I were murdered

Then Marwān would be the leader of the believers.

After the recitation of the *qasīda*, Abū Muḥammad al-Sufyānī and all who were there took the oath of allegiance to Marwān.⁷³⁴ According to Yaʿqūbī's report, the deposed caliph Ibrāhīm b. al-Walīd also took oath to Marwān.⁷³⁵ According to a report, the members of the Umayyads family, including Sulaymān b. Hishām, also took the oath of allegiance to him.⁷³⁶

Marwān: His Life and Personality

Marwān b. Muḥammad b. Marwān b. al-Ḥakam – the last Umayyad caliph – was born in 76 AH.⁷³⁷ His father Muḥammad was a wālī (governor) of al-Jazīra in 65 AH.⁷³⁸ He was a commander-in-chief in the battle against Musʿab b. Zubayr in Iraq in 71 AH.⁷³⁹ ʿAbd al-Malik also appointed him as governor of Armenia and al-Jazīra in 73 AH. There are differing reports regarding his governorship in the reign of al-Walīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik. According to Ibn Kathīr, al-Walīd, discharged him from the governorship of Armenia and al-Jazīra against the will of his father ʿAbd al-Malik, and appointed as governor his own brother Maslama b. ʿAbd al-Malik, who worked there until ʿUmar b. Hubayra replaced him on the order of Yazīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik in 102 AH.⁷⁴⁰ However, according to al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad b. Marwān remained governor of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Jazīra until his death under the reign of Yazīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik.⁷⁴¹

Marwān's maternal lineage is complex and obscure. Al-Ṭabarī reports on the authority of ʿAlī b. Mujāhid and Abī Sinān al-Juhnī that Marwān's mother was a slave of Ibrāhīm b. al-Ashtar. She was pregnant when she was taken by Muḥammad b. Marwān after the death of Ibrāhīm b. al-

⁷³⁴ al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 337/2; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 280/4; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 273/4.

⁷³⁵ al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, 337/3; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 281/4; al-Suyūṭī, *Jalāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr* (d. 911/1505), *Tārīkh al-Khulafāʾ*, (Cairo: 1350) 169.

⁷³⁶ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 280-281/4; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 274/4.

⁷³⁷ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 577/3; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 15/9; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tahdhīb*, 197/16.

⁷³⁸ *ibid.*, 557/3.

⁷³⁹ *ibid.*, 519/3.

⁷⁴⁰ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, 67/9; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 118/4.

⁷⁴¹ Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 167/4; Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-Ibar*, 165/3.

Ashtar, and that she later gave birth to Marwān “on the bed” of Muḥammad b. Marwān.⁷⁴² On the other hand, Al-Balādhurī and al-Masʿūdī report that Marwān’s mother was a Kurdish slave of Muṣʿab b. al-Zubayr and Muḥammad b. Marwān took her after the assassination of Muṣʿab; and her name was Rayyā or Ṭarūna.⁷⁴³ Similarly Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih reveals contradictory reports. He reports that Marwān’s mother was the slave of a cook of Muṣʿab b. Al-Zubayr or Ibn Ashtar; and the name of the cook was Zarbā who was also a slave of Muslim b. ʿUmar al-Bāhilī. However, in another report, Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih reports that Marwān’s mother was the daughter of Ibrāhīm b. al-Ashtar.⁷⁴⁴ The historians did not reveal much about the life of Marwān’s mother except a report that shows her nobility and goodness. Hijjāj b. Qutayba b. Muslim al-Bāhilī reported that when he left with Marwān’s family for Africa after his assassination. Marwān’s mother also accompanied them. Along the way, she did not cry, not even once, and they never heard her utter a word of fear.⁷⁴⁵ Nevertheless, even though she was a slave, Marwān’s mother possessed noble qualities. It was a great challenge for Marwān to establish his authority as a caliph against the convention of the Umayyad family, according to which the child of a slave woman could not become a caliph.

Marwān had to face two strong movements in the east. Firstly, the Khawārij who were active in Jazīra under the leadership of Ḍaḥḥak b. Qays, a Shaybānī leader. Secondly there was the ʿAlid movement under the patronage of ʿAbd Allah b. Muʿāwiya. These movements had deep roots in the past but had always been suppressed by the collective efforts of the Umayyads. Contrary to precedent, this time the Umayyads were not united and these movements had gathered support from eminent members of the previous regime. For instance, Manṣūr b. Jamhūr and ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar made an alliance with ʿAlid leader ʿAbd Allah b. Muʿāwiya. Similarly, Sulaymān b. Hishām joined the Khawārij movements. Marwān b. Muḥammad took the situation seriously and ordered Yazīd b. ʿUmar b. Hubayra to attack Kufa.

Marwān’s army was triumphant; the opposition was not united while Marwān’s army was strong enough to defeat the opponents. Ibn Ḍubāra, Marwān’s general, restored peace by the spring of

⁷⁴² al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 356/4; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tahdhīb*, 191/16.

⁷⁴³ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 186/5; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, 426/2.

⁷⁴⁴ Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *al-Iqd al-Farīd*, 468/4

⁷⁴⁵ Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tahdhīb*, 47-48/4

130/748.⁷⁴⁶ But this peace was not sustainable since plague, famine and a terrible earthquake worsened the economy of Damascus. Meanwhile, black clouds appeared in the Khurasānian horizon. Abū Muslim Khurāsānī managed successfully to establish his authority in Khurāsān by expelling the Umayyad governor, Naṣr b. Sayyār, from the capital city of Mrew in Jamādī II 130/February 748. Yazīd Ibn Hubayra, the governor of Iraq, dispatched two armies under Nubāta b. Ḥaṇḏala al-Kalbī, the °amil (deputy) of Ibn Hubayra in Jurjān,⁷⁴⁷ and °Amir b. Ḍubāra al-Murrī, a commander of Ibn Hubayra sent to Naṣr b. Sayyār, to curtail the rebellion's advance from the Kurāsānian frontiers.⁷⁴⁸ Both commanders were seriously defeated by Qaḥṭabah b. Shabīb, a commander of Abū Muslim's army.⁷⁴⁹ There was already a joint opposition of Khawārij, °Alids, and Yemenīs in Iraq and alienated members of the Umayyad family. They prepared the ground for an °Abbasid revolution. Except for Wāsiṭ, where Ibn Hubayra was still in power, the whole of Iraq was under the control of the Abbāsids. Abū al-°Abbās al-Saffaḥ took the oath of caliph in Kufa in Rabī° I, 132/October 749. Marwān, with his efficient Qaysī adherents, marched towards Kufa to end the instability and rebellion forever. On the other hand, the °Abbāsids were ready to retaliate against him. The battle was fought between two groups on the river Zāb in Jamādī II 132/ February 750 and Marwān was defeated. The Umayyad caliphate came to an end when the Yamanies opened the doors of Damascus for the Abbasids. Marwān was killed in Egypt in Dhū al-Ḥajja 132/ (August 750).⁷⁵⁰

Marwān's titles

Marwān's rivals usually criticised him because of his maternal lineage. Similarly, they attempted to disparage his decency by calling him uncomplimentary names. He was given two nicknames: al-ḥimār (The Ass of Mesopotamia) and al-Ja°dī. Al-ḥimār is a famous nickname for Marwān in common sources of Umayyad history.⁷⁵¹ Ibn Khaldūn also asserts that he was given this nickname

⁷⁴⁶ Kennedy, *The Prophet*, 115.

⁷⁴⁷ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 326-367/4.

⁷⁴⁸ *ibid.*, 334/4.

⁷⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 325/4.

⁷⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 350/4.

⁷⁵¹ These titles are given to him by the later historians who are generally hostile towards the Umayyads. There are two main sources of the Umayyads' history and both are hostile towards them: *Tārīkh* of al-Ya°qūbī and *Tārīkh al-*

children.⁷⁶¹ Because of his heretical ideas al-Ja^cd was killed by Hishām b. °Abd al-Malik when he was in the prison of Khālīd b. °Abd Allah al-Qasrī in 124AH.⁷⁶² Al-Ja^cd was one of the leading mu^ctazilī and qadarī scholars of his time.⁷⁶³ Ibn Khaldūn argues that Marwān was given the title of al-Ja^cdī by his enemies.⁷⁶⁴ Aḥmad Zakkī Pashā also asserts that when the people of Khurāsān observed his extraordinary knowledge, they nicknamed him al-Ja^cdī as his ideas were close to Ja^cd's understanding of Islam.⁷⁶⁵ On the other hand, the sources generally reveal that Yazīd b. al-Walīd was a qadarī⁷⁶⁶ and the mu^ctazilīs assisted him in deposing al-Walīd b. Yazīd and becoming a caliph.⁷⁶⁷ They also influenced him to nominate his brother Ibrāhīm and then °Abd al-°Azīz b. Al-Ḥajjāj for the succession because of their mu^ctazilī ideas.⁷⁶⁸ In this context, it is interesting that the sources relate both Yazīd b. al-Walīd and his opponent Marwān b. Muḥammad with qadarī thoughts. Perhaps, they were considered in this way because of their struggle for power against the established authority patterns.

Marwān was fond of travelling and expeditions.⁷⁶⁹ At the age of twenty-nine he fought for the first time in 105AH and conquered Nunīya from the Kamakh Damascus side of the Roman Empire.⁷⁷⁰ Marwān attempted to show his command, valour and justice. When he left al-Jazīra for Damascus, he organised his forces and ordered the soldiers to purchase things with money and not to harm

⁷⁶¹Ibn Athīr, °Izz al-Dīn, °Alī b. Muḥammad (d. 630/1233), *al-Lubāb fī Tahdhīb al-Ansāb*, (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qudsī, 1357AH), 230/1.

⁷⁶² Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 255/4; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, 350/9.

⁷⁶³ The al-Qadariya and al-Mu^ctazila are two schools of Muslim theology but they have significant areas of identical, shared beliefs. According to their understanding, God is the *qadīm* (one that exists beyond the limitation of time); the Qurān is a created being, human beings have free will and they have complete authority to choose good or evil, the good and evil can be discerned by human intellect. *cf.* al-Sharistānī, Abū al-Faṭḥ Muḥammad b. °Abd al-Karīm (d. 548/1153), *al-Milal wa-al-Niḥal*, (Cairo, 1951), 57-112; See Chapter, Five.

Note: See al-Ja^cd's introduction and thoughts: al-Baghdādī, Abū al-Manṣūr °Abd al-Qādir b. Ṭāhir, (d. 429AH), *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*, ed. Muḥammad Badr, (Cairo: 1910), 199-200; al-Sharistānī, Abū al-Faṭḥ Muḥammad b. °Abd al-Karīm (d. 548/1153), *al-Milal wa-al-Niḥal*, (Cairo, 1951), 113-115; al-Jāhiz, °Amr b. Baḥr (d. 255/868) *al-Tāj fī Akhlāq al-Mumlūk*, ed. Aḥmad Zakkī Pashā, (Cairo: al-Matba'ah al-Amīriyah, 1914), 106.

⁷⁶⁴ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-'Ibar*, 282/3.

⁷⁶⁵ al-Jāhiz, *al-Tāj*, 106.

⁷⁶⁶ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 256, 270, 272/4; Ibn °Abd Rabbih, *al-'Iqd al-Farīd*, 465/4.

⁷⁶⁷ al-Mas'ūdī, *Tārīkh*, 239/3

⁷⁶⁸ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 270/4; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 277/4; Ibn °Abd Rabbih, *al-'Iqd al-Farīd*, 466/4.

⁷⁶⁹ Ibn °Asākir, *Tahdhīb*, 194/16.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibn °Asākir, , *Tārīkh Dimashq*, 192/16 (1).

anyone among the civilians.⁷⁷¹ Historians reveal that forgiveness was one Marwān's most impressive characteristics. In the battle of °Ayn al-Jar, there were about seventeen thousand prisoners from the battle. Marwān not only released all of them (except two men who were assassins of al-Walīd b. Yazīd), but he also gave one dinār to every prisoner.⁷⁷² After the defeat of the Battle of Zāb, he set out to Egypt where he was traced near the village of al-Bauṣīr. It is revealed that when the enemy surrounded him, he continued to fight alone against a group of soldiers, until his death.

⁷⁷¹ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 272/4.

⁷⁷² al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 274-275/4; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 283/4.

Appendix II

The Umayyad Principles of Succession

Mu^ʿāwīya is considered to be the founder of the Umayyad caliphate. Dennett argues that the matter of qualification and the appointment of the caliph was not settled when Mu^ʿāwīya's position as a universal caliph was acknowledged. That only became possible due to Ḥasan b. ʿAlī's agreement with Mu^ʿāwīya.⁷⁷³ In order to establish a practical system for the appointment or nomination of a caliph, Mu^ʿāwīya amalgamated Arab cultural values with the established system of the Roman Empire. Dennett writes:

Mu^ʿāwīya provided for a successor in a way which was followed by the Umayyads. In pre-Islamic times, chieftainship of a tribe depended on the free birth of the chief with particular emphasis on the nobility of his mother, maturity of years, and acknowledged courage and judgement in affairs. A man fulfilling these requirements was chosen by acclaim. The principle of heredity where the eldest son succeeded his father did not exist. Mu^ʿāwīya did not violate the basic theory that his successor should be of free birth, and elected, but he did introduce the principle of dynastic succession by causing his son to follow him.⁷⁷⁴

Dennett notes that Mu^ʿāwīya summoned the leaders of the Syrian tribes to convince them to take an oath to Yazīd as the next caliph. After gaining their solemn agreement, Mu^ʿāwīya dispatched deputations to the principal men of the empire to persuade them by means of threats and bribes to take an oath. After a careful assessment of the method of appointment introduced by Mu^ʿāwīya, Dennett argues that "the Umayyads continued this method adapted by Mu^ʿāwīya."⁷⁷⁵ Thus, according to Dennett's analysis, free birth was an essential condition for the qualification of a caliph. For instance, Maslama, the son of ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān, was deemed excellent among his fellows because of his courage and valour.⁷⁷⁶ Nevertheless, his name was not put forward for

⁷⁷³ Dennett, Marwān ibn Muḥammad, 163.

⁷⁷⁴ *ibid.*, 165.

⁷⁷⁵ *ibid.*, 166.

⁷⁷⁶ Maslama b. ʿAbd al-Malik was a great warrior and administrator. He participated in many significant battles against the Byzantines. He defeated the Byzantines in 87 and 89 AH during the reign of Walid b. ʿAbd al-Malik. (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 673, 678/3) Sulaymān b. ʿAbd al-Malik also appointed him as chief of the army sent to attack

the post of caliph because his mother was a slave.⁷⁷⁷ Similarly, Zayd b. ʿAlī's claim to the caliphship was rejected even by his own family and by the Quraysh simply because his mother was a slave. When Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik criticised Zayd b. ʿAlī because of his maternal lineage, he retorted that God did not differentiate between people based on their lineage as the prophet Ismāʿīl was the son of a slave.⁷⁷⁸

Secondly, if we look at the Umayyads' history, hereditary succession from father to son, was not necessary. Four sons of ʿAbd al-Malik, al-Walīd, Sulaymān, Yazīd and Hishām became caliph one by one; and their cousin ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz was nominated by Sulaymān instead of his son or brother, Yazīd. Before the movement of Yazīd b. al-Walīd against his cousin al-Walīd b. Yazīd, it was the principle that if the reigning figure had selected anyone as his successor and his oath of allegiance had been taken, then its violation was considered to be a serious offence that might lead towards internal conflict and disorder. Actually the caliph's nomination of a successor and affirmation of the principal men of the empire was considered an expression of the will of the community. For that reason, the defiance of this bond might harm the fabric of unity. Therefore, the Umayyad rulers were careful not to defy this principal rule of succession. For instance Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik was inclined to nominate his own son to succeed him but the oath had already been taken in favour of al-Walīd b. Yazīd during the reign of Yazīd II. Yazīd II designated first his brother Hishām and then his own son Yazīd to succeed, and Hishām had to respect his predecessor caliph's nomination.⁷⁷⁹

The third indispensable principle for the qualification of a caliph's succession was the maturity of the successor. We have observed that most of the Umayyad caliphs desired to nominate their own sons for succession but they failed to do so if their sons were not mature enough to hold the reign

Qusṭunṭunya in 92AH. (al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 48/4) In 102 AH, he defeated Yazīd b. al-Muhallab and restored peace in the Eastern Part of Caliphate. He was appointed governor of Kufa, Baṣra and Khurāsān by Yazīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik. al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 90/4.

⁷⁷⁷ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 668/3.

⁷⁷⁸ *ibid.*, 196/4.

⁷⁷⁹ *ibid.*, 222/4.

Note: al-Ṭabarī reports that al-Walīd was eleven years old when Yazīd II called for an act of succession for him. He was fifteen years old when Yazīd died in 105 AH.

of the caliphate. Sulaymān b. ʿAbd al-Malik and Yazīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik were both interested in designating their own sons for succession but they could not, since their sons were too young to rule.⁷⁸⁰

Besides these principles governing qualification for the role of caliph, every candidate for the caliphal position during the Umayyad period, had to show he was willing to follow Islamic principles. Secondly, he also had to seek acclamation from the Muslim community. The acclamation ceremony was held in the mosque and delegations (wufūd) of nobles (ashrāf) gathered from all over the caliphate. By open acclamation, the delegations of nobles expressed the will of the community through which a candidate for the post of caliph sought legitimacy. For instance, a delegation of nobles gathered under the headship of Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qays⁷⁸¹ to recognise Yazīd I to succeed Muʿāwīya. Similarly, a delegation of nobles gathered in Damascus to affirm Marwān I's authority. Generally, the caliph's successor was selected by open acclamation during the life of a sitting caliph. However, when Yazīd III violated this principle and killed the sitting caliph, he called the delegations of nobles to justify his violent act and presented himself in front of them to be accepted as caliph.⁷⁸² According to Dennett's argument, there were two basic elements that obliterated the elective democratic basis of the caliphate. First, by virtue of their superior military and political authority, the Syrians asserted their opinion. They had the ability to abrogate the desires of the wufūd of Iraq and Ḥijāz. Secondly, the community's wishes were not conveyed properly during the interregnum. The reigning caliph had the authority to nominate his successor during his lifetime. Thus the nominee, by virtue of his position, could manage to manipulate the whole process of election in his favour.⁷⁸³ Although there is an opportunity in the procedure to manipulate the nomination of the future caliph, even then the Umayyad caliphs were at least theoretically bound to establish their government observing the basic principle of Islamic teaching and to seek the will of the community by open acclamation.

⁷⁸⁰ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 49, 222/4; Dennett, *Marwān ibn Muḥammad*, 166-7.

⁷⁸¹ al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qays al-Fihri was one of the most important commanders of Muʿāwīya's army. He participated in the battle of Siffin in 37AH and fought against ʿAlī.) al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 82/3).

⁷⁸² Dennett, *Marwān ibn Muḥammad*, 167, 168.

⁷⁸³ *ibid.*, 168.

Appendix III.

Khālīd al-Qasrī and the Fall of Umayyad Rule in Modern Umayyad Historiography

One of the most important steps taken by Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik was the removal of a Qaysī governor, ʿUmar b. Hubayra, and the appointment of a Yemenī governor, Khālīd al-Qasrī, in his place, in the Eastern provinces of the kingdom in 105/724. These steps reflect a radical change in tribal policy. Yazīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik was inclined towards the pro-Qays policy; and contrary to his predecessor, Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik, formulated a pro-Yemen policy. Shaban argues that Hishām wanted to change the harsh and inflexible policy of Ibn Hubayra towards a moderate and flexible pro-Yemen policy.⁷⁸⁴ Al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Athīr record that some of Hishām’s Qaysī supporters criticized him when he appointed Khālīd al-Qasrī as governor of the East.⁷⁸⁵ In contrast to Shaban, Judd asserts that the tribal explanation for the appointment of Khālīd seems inappropriate. Khālīd belonged to the Bajila tribe that, “was only marginally identified with the Yemenī bloc and often held an essentially neutral position in tribal struggle.”⁷⁸⁶ Secondly, Khalid was more associated with the Umayyad family than with Yemen power politics; he was a foster brother of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik. Khālīd was appointed because of his loyalty and administrative skills rather than his tribal concerns.⁷⁸⁷ Judd also rejects Shaban’s argument that Ibn Hubayra was replaced by Khālīd because of the former’s harsh policies in Iraq. Judd asserts that “Khālīd’s rule was hardly more ‘moderate and flexible’ than that of his Qaysī predecessors.” He was an ideal administrator like al-Hajjaj. He attempted to maintain peace and to implement Hishām’s policies of infrastructural development. Because of his early training under the tutelage of al-Ḥajjāj, he skilfully attempted to restore peace and collect surplus. In order to attract the non-Muslim community, he recruited them in administration and constructed a church for Christians. Judd argues that, “perhaps this is why M. A. Shaban characterized him as ‘lenient’.”⁷⁸⁸

⁷⁸⁴ Shaban, *Islamic History*, 155-157; Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, 47, 235, n. 338.

⁷⁸⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1468/2; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 124/5.

⁷⁸⁶ Judd, *The Third Fitna*, 64.

⁷⁸⁷ *ibid.*, 64.

⁷⁸⁸ *ibid.*, 64.

There are many assumptions regarding the removal of Khālīd al-Qasrī from his post. Khālīd was an efficient administrator and loyal to the central government of Damascus. One of the reasons noted in the historical sources is the jealousy of Farrukh Abū Muthannā, a personal secretary of Hishām who used to look after his personal estates in Syria. He convinced Hishām that he misused the revenues of Iraq and he extended his power by appointing his brother Asad in Khurāsān. The sources also reveal that Khālīd and his son had collected a large amount of wealth⁷⁸⁹ and he became arrogant, offensive and insulted Hishām. It was reported to Hishām that he called him the son of a mentally deficient woman (Ibn al-ḥamqa).⁷⁹⁰ Whether these reports are based on reality or fabricated by the opponents of Khālīd is unclear since the sources do not support either of these interpretations.

Khālīd was also criticized because of his soft behaviour towards non-Muslims particularly, Christians. His mother was a Christian and she did not accept Islam. Khālīd's critics accused him of not being a dedicated Muslim as he constructed a Church for Christians and a Synagogue for Jews.⁷⁹¹ Judd argues, "whether Khālīd was unusually lenient toward religious minorities is difficult to determine, since descriptions of his generosity toward non-Muslims appear in the context of accusations from his enemies."⁷⁹²

Shaban argues that Khālīd's dismissal and his replacement by Yūsuf b. ʿUmar shows that Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik changed his tribal policy. He preferred to appoint a determined pro-Qays governor in place of a lenient pro-Yemen one. Yūsuf b. ʿUmar, who was trained under the tutelage of Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, was suitable for the expansionist policy of Hishām. In contrast to Khālīd's lenient behaviour, Yūsuf was considered to be more resolute and aggressive in extracting tax revenues from his subjects. The central government of Damascus collected extra money. Due to a treasury surplus, the state initiated its expansionist policy.⁷⁹³ Contrary to Shaban's argument, Judd vindicates Wellhausen's standpoint, according to which Khālīd was not a lenient administrator and

⁷⁸⁹ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1615, 1641-1642/2; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 124/5.

⁷⁹⁰ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1646, 1647/2; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 220/5.

⁷⁹¹ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 280-281/2.

⁷⁹² Judd, *The Third Fitna*, 66.

⁷⁹³ Shaban, *Islamic History*, 143, 154.

“his subjects resented the heavy tax demands he placed on them and expenditures for irrigation projects.”⁷⁹⁴ Judd argues that Shaban did not correctly analyse the matter that land reforms and investment in agriculture contributed positively rather than draining the treasury.

There was no substantial administrative policy change with the change of governorship, since Yūsuf implemented the same financial policy as Khālīd regarding tax collection and the extraction of surplus amounts of money to send payments to Damascus. In fact, ʿUmar b. Hubayra, Khalid al-Qasrī’s predecessor, had devised a financial policy through which substantial resources could be generated for the central government of Damascus. The same policy was adopted by his successor governors Khālīd and Yūsuf. Although they were apparently hostile to each other their administrative policy remained the same.⁷⁹⁵ There was no major policy change observed during the latter’s governorship. The sources do not clearly illustrate the exact motive behind the removal of Khālīd and his replacement by Yūsuf. The role of tribal power politics in the removal of Khālīd does not seem to be central. Instead, Yūsuf gained power against Khālīd by highlighting his corruption in relation to state revenues. Khālīd was dismissed and Yūsuf was appointed to probe the matter.⁷⁹⁶ Thus the Qays-Yemen conflict is not a dominant feature in the dismissal of Khālīd. However, tribal feuds played a more central role in the narrative of Khālīd’s assassination.⁷⁹⁷

Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik kept the balance between competing tribal, political and religious groups and he did not authorize his governors and officials beyond their limits. For instance, he appointed Yūsuf b. ʿUmar as governor of the East but he did not give him control over Khālīd. This was the key feature that was missing in the character of his successors. When al-Walīd came to power in 125/743 after the death of Hishām, he made a few changes in some of the posts. He jailed some sons of Hishām and dismissed Ibrāhīm and Muḥammad, the sons of Hishām b. Ismāʿīl, from their posts in Ḥijāz and appointed Yūsuf b. Muḥammad b. Yūsuf in their place. On the basis of these changes, it is often argued that al-Walīd made a substantial change in government policy on account of tribal concerns. It is said that he attempted to formulate a pro-Qaysī tribal policy that

⁷⁹⁴ Wellhausen, *Arab Kingdom*, 331-333.

⁷⁹⁵ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, pp. 267-268/2.

⁷⁹⁶ cf. al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1654/2; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 298/2.

⁷⁹⁷ Judd, *The Third Fitna*, 68.

focused on the expansion of the state, and particularly marginalized the Yemenīs who were traditionally the main power of the Syrian army. In contrast to these assertions it seems that the early historical sources present a different picture.

The Portrayal of al-Walīd in Modern Sources and the Conflict between al-Walīd and Khālīd al-Qasrī

Most of al-Walīd's actions, as illustrated in the sources, were due to personal revenge. He treated Sulaymān b. Hishām harshly and put him in prison at ʿAmmān because he had offended him during the reign of his father. Similarly he killed Ibrāhīm and Muḥammad, sons of Hishām b. Ismāʿīl al-Makhzūmī who was a maternal uncle of Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik. Al-Walīd killed them because they had advised Hishām to oust al-Walīd in favour of Maslama.⁷⁹⁸ The sources reveal that al-Walīd did not treat all Hishām's sons in the same way. He treated Maslama with respect. Despite the fact that his name was floated as heir by Hishām's supporters, al-Walīd respected him because Maslama used to respect him and attempted a reconciliation between Hishām and al-Walīd. The portrayal of al-Walīd in both medieval and modern sources is not presented reverentially. The sources record his reprisals and the treatment of his enemies extensively, but the most important of these accounts are the imprisonment of Sulaymān b. Hishām, and the handing over of Khālīd al-Qasrī to his opponent, Yūsuf b. ʿUmar.

The question is, why would al-Walīd sell Khālīd to his opponent, Yūsuf b. ʿUmar? There are many interpretations of this event recorded in the chronicles. Khālīd al-Qasrī objected to al-Walīd when he nominated his immature sons, al-Ḥakam and ʿUthmān as his successors, and this act angered al-Walīd so he punished him by handing him over to his enemy.⁷⁹⁹ It is also narrated that al-Walīd had to face financial shortfalls because he raised stipends and extra bonuses for the army. When Yūsuf b. ʿUmar offered him money (between 5 to 50 million dirhams) in exchange for his enemy Khālīd, he accepted the offer without realising its implications. Judd examines all these reports and argues that, on the basis of al-Walīd's treatment of Khālīd al-Qasrī, several modern interpretations propose that al-Walīd was motivated by his pro-Qaysī attitude; however, none of

⁷⁹⁸ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 222, 231-232/4.

⁷⁹⁹ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 283/2; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1776/2; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 281/5.

these interpretations is satisfactory. Judd asserts that Khālīd's Yemenī identity was not well known as he belonged to the Bajila tribe who were only loosely related to Yemen and he was not a leading figure in the Yemen, as Shaban argues.⁸⁰⁰ He further elaborates that Khālīd was closely associated with Qayīs as he had been under the tutelage of al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, a Qaysī leader. Judd criticizes Wellhausen's labelling of Yūsuf and his supporters as "Ḥajjājids" ignoring the fact that Khālīd was also the protégé of Yūsuf. Judd also rejects Crone's assertion and argues that she ignored Khālīd's connection to al-Ḥajjāj.⁸⁰¹ Judd concludes that, "These factors blur Khālīd's tribal identity, suggesting that tribal factors may be exaggerated and that divisions between tribal groups, whatever they signify, may not have been as rigid as most analyses of the period suggest."⁸⁰²

Modern scholars, particularly Wellhausen and Shaban, consider the death of Khālīd al-Qasrī (d. 126/734) to be a major factor in the demise of al-Walīd. Wellhausen argues that Khālīd's death played a unifying role for the opponents of al-Walīd; while Shaban suggests that the death of Khālīd augmented and extended the rivalry between Qays and Yemen. Thus, according to this interpretation, Khālīd's death is illustrated as the basic reason for the fall of the al-Walīd rule. Judd argues that according to the early sources, the principal narrative in al-Walīd's demise is neither the tribal rivalry between the Qays and Yemen, nor Khālīd's death. Thus, the interpretations made by modern scholars are not supported by the early historical sources. Judd also analyses the issue from this perspective arguing that:

The narrative of al-Walīd's death focuses almost extensively on al-Walīd's personal failing and moral inadequacies, presenting essentially a morality tale in which the immoral actions of the central character ultimately have negative consequences. Its appearance in both al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī, via al-Madā'inī, suggests that this is relatively early account. Its preservation in later sources, particularly Ibn ʿAsākir, demonstrates that this account remained the most widely accepted narrative of al-Walīd's death and did not change substantially over the centuries.⁸⁰³

⁸⁰⁰ Judd, *The Third Fitna*, 75; Shaban, *Islamic History*, 154.

⁸⁰¹ Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom*, 359.

⁸⁰² Judd, *The Third Fitna*, 76.

⁸⁰³ *ibid.*, 77.

It seems that tribal conflict was not a dominant factor in the demise of al-Walīd. The last dialogue between al-Walīd and Yazīd b. ʿAnbasa also confirms that al-Walīd's moral integrity and religious credibility had been challenged. As far as his policies are concerned, the rebels did not highlight the issue. The dialogue occurred when Damascus was captured by Yazīd b. al-Walīd, and al-Walīd's reliable followers, such as his cousin al-ʿAbbās b. Walīd, deserted him while al-Walīd was in the fortress at al-Bakhrā, near Tadmur. Al-Walīd discussed the possible end of the rebellion with Yazīd b. ʿAnbasa and asked him to negotiate with the rebels. He claimed that he had raised the army stipends, reformed the taxation system and introduced many reforms for the public good. Yazīd b. ʿAnbasa told him that the rebels were not against his policies; rather they accused him of personal offences such as his drinking, debauchery, and contempt for Divine law. Al-Walīd did not deny any of these allegations and asserted that they had exaggerated his faults.⁸⁰⁴ This dialogue also indicates that his enemies did not criticise his policies but his character. Similarly, Yazīd b. ʿAnbasa did not point out that his mal-treatment of Khālīd and the Yemenīs had provoked the rebellion movement. These accounts invalidate Shaban's assertion that "the Syrians, disgruntled with policies which entailed constant campaigning in all parts of the empire turned against Walīd II."⁸⁰⁵ Shaban observes a shift from pro-Yemenī to pro-Qaysī expansion in state policy during the reign of al-Walīd. The fact is that al-Walīd retained the majority of officials from the previous regime, and made very few changes in Hishām's administration. He punished or removed those officials who opposed him, and in the past he had advised Hishām to oust al-Walīd in favour of Maslama, as has been mentioned above. The change in the officials of Hijāz is irrelevant. Their replacement with Yūsuf b. Muḥammad does not reflect al-Walīd's pro-Qaysī policy; rather, he appointed him because he was his maternal uncle and loyal to him.⁸⁰⁶ As far as the expansionist policy is concerned and the appointment of the immature sons al-Ḥakam and ʿUthmān as governors of Ḥimṣ and Damascus respectively, it is more symbolic and in fact the cities were run by the officials from the previous regime.⁸⁰⁷ In particular he retained all governors and officials

⁸⁰⁴ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 332/2; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1799-1800/2; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 287/5.

⁸⁰⁵ Shaban, *Islamic History*, 155.

⁸⁰⁶ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 231/4; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 273-274/5.

⁸⁰⁷ Note: it is not clear how old his sons were when they were appointed as governor of these cities.

who had been appointed on the frontiers during the period of Hishām.⁸⁰⁸ This suggests that al-Walīd did not change the expansionist policy of the previous rule. On the other hand, in order to win the hearts of the army, al-Walīd increased the stipends of, and awarded an extra bonus to, the Syrian army.⁸⁰⁹

On the basis of these accounts, Judd argues, “Al-Walīd’s acts of revenge are portrayed in the sources in purely personal terms and any suggestion that these acts served either tribal or political agendas has no foundation in the accounts themselves.”⁸¹⁰ Thus, it can be concluded that the rebellion movement initiated the struggle to oust al-Walīd on moral grounds rather on policy issues. Therefore, the elements of conflict between Qays and Yemen and the death of Khālīd al-Qasrī were not dominant narratives in the fall of the regime.

The Rebellion of Yazīd b. al-Walīd and Tribal Conflict in Modern Historiography

It is important here to understand the elements that motivated Yazīd to rebel against al-Walīd. Al-Madā’inī illustrates many accounts which describe Yazīd’s motives. According to most of these accounts, the conflict between Qays and Yemen is the prime theme. The Yemenīs were annoyed with al-Walīd because of his ill-treatment of Khālīd al-Qasrī. It is a matter of fact that Khālīd’s Yemenī identity is not central, since he was marginally related to the Yemenī bloc. Judd argues that “it is possible that Yamanī leaders were motivated by their hatred towards Yūsuf b. ‘Umar and that Khālīd was transformed into a true Yamanī to serve their tribal agenda.”⁸¹¹ Yazīd b. al-Walīd had observed the situation and he had perhaps taken advantage of tribal strife for his own purpose.

The second most important theme presented in al-Madā’inī’s accounts is conflict within the Umayyad family. Al-Walīd offended them, particularly the sons of Hishām and his close relatives. He further marginalized them when he nominated his young sons as his successors and incarcerated the son of al-Walīd b. ‘Abd al-Malik.⁸¹² On the other hand, the sources depicted Yazīd

⁸⁰⁸ Judd, *The Third Fitna*, 73.

⁸⁰⁹ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, 318/2; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1754/2; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 268/5.

⁸¹⁰ Judd, *The Third Fitna*, 73.

⁸¹¹ *ibid.*, 85.

⁸¹² al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, 326/2; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1775-1776/2; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 280/5.

b. al-Walīd as virtuous, envious and austere, and a critic of al-Walīd's obsession with pleasure. Yazīd's elder brother, al-ʿAbbās rejected his idea of carrying out a rebellion against a legitimate caliph. He warned him that this kind of action would ruin the dignity of the Umayyad family. Yazīd did not pay attention to his advice and initiated a rebellion against al-Walīd.⁸¹³ Al-Balādhurī notes that Yazīd's aggressive sermons against al-Walīd played a central role in rebellion.⁸¹⁴ Because of his temperament, Wellhausen aptly comments that Yazīd was the "most ambitious amongst his brothers."⁸¹⁵ Through this discussion, it can be asserted that Yazīd was actually motivated by his own passion while he utilized all factions that were against al-Walīd. That is, he manipulated internal family issues and the conflict between Qays and Yemen for his own advantages.

In order to legitimize his revolt against a legitimate ruler, Yazīd attempted to validate his action by employing religious themes. By doing this, he was successful in winning the support of the religious class, particularly the Qadrīya and Khawārij. In his accession speech, he rejected the traditional rules for the appointment and accountability of a caliph. He promised that he would act upon the teaching of Islam and claimed that people had the right to reproach him if he repudiated the rules of justice according to the Qurān and Sunna. He asserted that the most eligible and virtuous member of a Muslim community was the most suitable to be a caliph. This argument was indeed analogous to the Khawārij concept of leadership.⁸¹⁶

In his accession speech Yazīd also declared that he would continue the construction projects initiated during the previous regimes. He declared that he would minimize the range of military campaigns and promised to spend the resources of each province on its own development. On the basis of these statements, some modern scholars, such as Shaban, argue that Yazīd's military and economic policy played a central role in the third fitna. There are serious questions about Shaban's interpretation. The early sources do not offer any evidence that al-Walīd was removed from his

⁸¹³ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 328/2; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1778/2; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 283/5.

⁸¹⁴ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, 327/2; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1784/2.

⁸¹⁵ Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom*, 362.

⁸¹⁶ Dennett, *Marwān*, 220.

post because of his economic and military policies or that the rebellion was initiated against him on these grounds. Judd criticizes Shaban's point of view and notes:

Shabān's thesis requires that economic concerns be so deeply encoded in the vocabulary of the Qays vs. Yaman feud that no indication of the parties' true motives shows through the rhetoric. While this is not entirely impossible, it is surprising that authors of later accounts, writing in periods when these symbolic references would not have been universally known, did not explain the symbolic importance of Qays-Yaman feuds. Yazīd's policies may have redressed some of his supporters' economic grievances, but they simultaneously exacerbated other grievances.⁸¹⁷

Further, it is worth noting that the Yamanīs supported Yazīd in his rebellion movement. However, pro-Yemen policy was not a central priority during Yazīd's period. The Yemenī support of Yazīd was based on anger about Khālīd al-Qasrī's death. Yazīd indeed removed Yūsuf b. ʿUmar from governorship and put him in prison, but he did not kill him in revenge on behalf of Khālīd. Moreover, Yazīd b. Khālīd al-Qasrī, who had worked under his father in Iraq and had profound experience of Iraqī administration, was not appointed to his father's post; rather, he was given a position in Damascus. Manṣūr b. Jamhūr who was also a Yemenī and a leading military leader of Yazīd's forces was appointed governor of Iraq. Al-Ṭabarī records that he was full of hatred for Yūsuf b. ʿUmar and was determined to take revenge for Khālīd al-Qasrī's death.⁸¹⁸ It is difficult to decide whether Manṣūr was appointed Governor because of his Yemenī identity or because of his military talent and religious affiliations. It is narrated that he was appointed not because of his tribal identity but because of his religious affinity with Yazīd's Ghaylānī connection.⁸¹⁹

However, when the people of Iraq complained about his behaviour, Yazīd removed him from his post and appointed ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar, a member of the Umayyad family, in his place. ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUmar's appointment shows that Yazīd was not anxious to promote pro-Yemenī politics in Iraq, otherwise he could have appointed another Yemenī after the dismissal of Manṣūr in his place. Judd aptly argues that "Yazīd's handling of the governorship of Iraq does not suggest the strongly

⁸¹⁷ Judd, *The Third Fitna*, 92.

⁸¹⁸ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1837/2.

⁸¹⁹ *ibid*, 1777-1778/2.

pro-Yaman policies which some modern scholars have ascribed to him.”⁸²⁰ He further asserts that the Yemen’s support of Yazīd in the revolt is exaggerated in the sources. Yazīd rewarded the Yemenīs for their support but he was more obliged to and inclined towards the members of the Umayyad family and, “to newly politically active Qadarites than to Yemen.”⁸²¹

Shortly after Yazīd’s period his brother Ibrāhīm b. al-Walīd came to power for a short time in 126/744. There is a lack of information regarding this in the sources.⁸²² He was portrayed as a passive character who took directions from Sulaymān b. Hishām and ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. al-Ḥajjāj. The sources do not have substantial records to show that Ibrāhīm supported the Yemen or attempted to eliminate the Qays. The most important reference in this regard is often made regarding the assassination of al-Walīd’s sons, al-Ḥakam and ʿUthmān and Yūsuf b. ʿUmar. The sources, such as those of al-Balādhurī, report that Ibrāhīm ordered the assassination of al-Walīd’s sons but ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. al-Ḥajjāj and Yazīd b. Khālīd al-Qasrī resolved to kill Yūsuf b. ʿUmar as well.⁸²³ However, there is no documentary evidence to indicate that Ibrāhīm supported Yemen and pressed the Qays during his brief period of rule.

⁸²⁰ Judd, *The Third Fitna*, 94.

⁸²¹ *ibid.*, 96.

⁸²² Many historians such as Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/844) and Ibn Ḥajar (d. 552/1449) do not mention him in their histories.

⁸²³ al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, 341/2.

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